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THE

French Convert

Being a True Relation of the

Happy Converſion

OF A

Noble French *LADY*

FROM

The Errors and Superſtitions of *Popery* to the *Reformed Religion*, by Means of a *Proteſtant* Gardener her Servant.

Wherein is ſhewed

Her Great and Unparallell'd Sufferings on the Account of her ſaid Converſion; as alſo Her Wonderful Deliverance from two Aſſaſſines hired by a *Popiſh* Prieſt to murder her: And of her Miraculous Preſervation in a Wood for two Years and how ſhe was at laſt Providentially found by her Huſband, who (together with her Parents) was brought over by her Means to the Embracing of the True Religion as were divers others alſo.

To which is added,

A Brief Account of the preſent Severe Perſecutions of the *French Proteſtants*.

The Seventh Edition.

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The COPY of a LETTER sent from a *French* Protestant Minister in *France*, to his Friend in *London*, with the following Relation.

My very good Friend,

HAving received yours the 13th of April, *N. S. I was not a little over-joyed, even in my Sufferings, to hear you are well settled in a Country, where you have the Freedom of enjoying the Exercise of the* True Religion, *a Thing to be valued above all other earthly Blessings; and next to that, I am much gladded to find you inform me that the Climate so well agrees with you and your Family, that you have been Healthful ever since you departed from me, and the rest of your dear Friends here; tho' many of us, and par-*

ticularly myself, labour under many Sufferings and Afflictions; I having (with many others) languish'd a long Time in Prison for the Sake of a good Conscience, afflicted with much Sickness, by reason of my close Confinement, which (Blessed be the Name of God enabling me) I have born with Patience; though many have dyed unpitied of their cruel Persecutors, yet the cry of Innocent Blood may in Time make them know, How hard it is to kick against the Pricks; *yet my Prayers are, That instead of sending any fearful Judgment on these* Popish Adversaries, *God would turn their Hearts, enlighten their Understandings, make them see their Error of their Ways, and Repent of the many Evils they have done to the* Poor Protestants, *without any manner of Cause or Provocation; to whom their Rage and Malice extend even beyond Death, for they still contiue the old Way of denying them* Christial Burial. *But this is all our Comfort,* It matters not where our Bodies lie, so be it our Souls are infolded in Christ's Arms. *Yet among the Miseries and Threats of Death, which I have undergone in taking Care of the Spiritual Welfare of those that God has committed to my Charge, I cannot but be great-*

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ly comforted when you tell me, the Fre
Protestant Church in England *flouris*
and that the Members of it, Walk wor
of their Calling, *gaining by their inof*
sive Way of Living, a good Repute am
Strangers; when in their native Coun
so much Inhumanity appears towards th
of the Reformed Profession; *for the* Pe
cution *in many Places rages still by th*
Impoverishing of Thousands of Famil
But not to be tedious to you, having
thing left to send you but my good Wis
and Prayers, except the inclosed Accoun
a very strange but blessed Alteration in
Family of the Count Alanson, *a wor*
Noble Man, well known to you; I h
drawn it up upon the strictest Enquiry i
the Truth of all the Material Circumstanc
as well as my Sufferings, and spare Ti
for the Care of those under my Cha
would permit; and send it to you as
Token of my Love, for the many Kin
nesses I have received at your Hand
that so you might Communicate it to othe
and make it publick if you see Occasio
that all may be made sensible of the wo
derful Goodness of Almighty God, a
Praise him for the Works he doth amo
the Children of Men. *For the Certain*

of what I have Written, though I have obliged for Methods-sake to use a few Expressions of my own, you may firmly rely on my Integrity, who am always a Well-wisher to the Health of your Soul and Body.

A D'Auborn.

THE

THE *French* Convert, &c.

IN Writing of the following Relation, wherein injured Innocence and oppreſſed Virtue does ſo Eminently Triumph over all the Rage and Malice both of Men and Devils, I ſhall not ſtudy to adorn my Stile with Flowers of Rhetorick, but lead the Reader by the Clue of Truth into the adorable Myſteries of Divine Providence, which are here diſplayed in ſuch a Series of Wonders, as can ſcarce be parallelled. As an Introduction to which, I will a little conſider how the Divine Goodneſs delights to bring Light out of Darkneſs, and makes even the Wicked confound themſelves in their own Devices, that out of their Evil Deſigns he may bring Good to paſs. For as *Joſeph's* being ſold into *Egypt*, and there falſly accuſed of Adultery, advanced him next to a Throne, and turned to the Shame of his accuſing Miſtreſs and treacherous Brethren; tho' at the beginning God meant it for Good, that he

might be Instrumental to preserve his Father and his Houshold alive, and turned the Malice of the *Patriarchs* into a Blessing: So the Miseries and Extraordinary Sufferings of the Noble Lady, whose Story I am going to recite, was made use of by Divine Providence, as a Means of the Conversion of her Husband, Parents, and many others, to the *True Religion*; which, as she had often said since, has been a very ample and glorious Recompence. But I shall not anticipate what with more Satisfaction you will find in the Relation it self; which takes as follows.

In *Britany*, one of the faireſt Provinces of *France*, there lately lived *Alanſon*, a Person of Noble Extraction, and of an Estate suitable to the Greatness of his Birth, and those Noble Qualities that enriched his Mind. Who being a Lover of Military Actions, was easily perſuaded to serve his King in the Wars, where having an Eminent Command given him, he behav'd himself with that Bravery as gained him the Admiration of his Enemies, the Love of his Friends, and fresh Honours from his King, who took particular Notice of his great Performances.

But

But in the Intervals of two or three Campaigns, he caſt his Eyes upon one *Deidamia*, a young Lady of Quality, not inferiour to himſelf for Birth, whoſe Beauty and Virtue were equally attractive. To her he made his Addreſſes, and the Equality of their Birth, and the Suitableneſs of their Diſpoſitions, made his Conqueſt the more eaſy; ſo that in a little Time they were Contracted and Married, to their mutual Joy and Satisfaction.

This happy Couple having for a whole Winter enjoy'd the Bleſſing of each others mutual Loves and endeared Affections, without the leaſt Umbrage of any interpoſing Cloud that might give an Allay to their Happineſs; at length the Spring came on, and the Armies gathering together, ſummoned *Alanſon* from the Repoſe he took in the ſoft Embraces of his Chaſte and Loving Wife, to the Field of War, to act his Part again upon that Stage of Honour, where he had already acquired ſo much Reputation. But he never ſeemed ſo unwilling to Court Fame Abroad, as now, ſince he muſt of neceſſity leave behind him the deareſt Part of himſelf; he had many Strugglings and Combats in his Mind, which ſeem'd to be divided between Love

and

and Honour; he was loath to leave his Lady, and yet unwilling to have his Reputation ſullied: And theſe different Paſſions in his Mind, cauſed ſuch an Alteration in his Countenance, that it was taken Notice by his Lady; who not knowing the Cauſe, was the more troubled at it. And therefore following him one Day into the Garden, (whither he had retir'd to conſider with himſelf what he had beſt to do) ſhe earneſtly preſſed him to let her know what it was that troubled him; for ſhe had for ſome Time, ſhe ſaid, obſerved he was diſquieted, but could not tell at what; and ſhe was fearful ſhe might ſome Way, (tho' ſhe knew it not) be the Occaſion of it; adding, *Command me any Thing a Wife can juſtly do, and I am all Obedience.* This tender Carriage of his Lady, added freſh Fuel to the Fire of his Affliction, and made him ſtill far more unwilling to leave her: Wherefore cauſing her to ſit down by him, he told her, She was indeed the innocent Occaſion of his Trouble, for her great Love and Tenderneſs to him, had ſo engaged his Heart to her in a Reciprocal Affection, that he knew not how to think of leaving her, though Honour loudly called him to the Field: His Lady, when he talked of leaving

ving her, was hardly kept from Swooning in his Arms, and could not forbear saying, *What! must we part then? Ah! Wretched* Deidamia! and straightways fell a Weeping: Her Tears did so prevail upon the Count, that Love had now obtained an entire Victory; and he Resolved to stay at Home with *Deidamia*; and therefore intreated her to dry up her Tears, and be comforted; for he had now come to a Resolution, rather to undergo some hard Censures for staying at Home, then by his going to the Camp, leave his dear *Deidamia* disconsolate. —— These kind Assurances of her Husband, gave her that Satisfaction, which soon shewed itself in a cheerful Countenance. And the Endearing Expressions she gave the Count on this Occasion, made him conclude they were both happy in each others Love. —

But behold, the Inconstancy of Worldly Happiness, and how little we can promise our selves of it here! We may indeed both Purpose and Resolve; but we can't secure ourselves from Disappointments: The Foot-steps of Divine Providence are often hard to Trace. Hence it is that we are told by the inspired Penman, That *the Ways of God are in the Deep*,

Deep, and his Paths in the great Waters, and his Footsteps are not known. And we see often, whatever pleasing Prospect of Felicity we have in view, one unforeseen Occasion, or sudden Turn of Providence, destroys it, and in a Moment deprives us of that Happiness which we had promised to our selves for many Years: And yet these Changes, to those that fear the Lord, are so disposed and ordered by God's Providence, that in the End they evidently Work together for their good. — And thus it fell out in the Instance before us: For whilst *Alanson* and his *Deidamia* delighted in each other, and were both happy in their Conjugal Affection, an Accident fell out, that put him under a Necessity of going to the Camp; which was, That a Colonel's Place in the Regiment of *Picardy* being Vacant, a Relation of *Alanson*'s at Court, out of a too Officious Kindness, put the King in mind of the good Services of *Alanson*, and desired his Majesty to bestow that Vacancy upon him: To which his Majesty (being sensible of his former Bravery and good Service) readily Consented, and ordered his Commission to be sent to him, which was done accordingly. When *Alanson* received this Commission

miſſion from the Purſevant who brought it, he gave him a generous Reward for his Pains; but was not very well pleaſed, neither with the new Honour his Majeſty had given him, nor with his Kinſman's too Officious Kindneſs in procuring it; becauſe it put him under a Neceſſity of parting from his Lady, which gave him a very ſenſible Diſpleaſure: But knowing that by this Commiſſion he was engaged too far for a Retreat, his Care was how to make his *Deidamia* as eaſie as he could; and therefore calling her to take a Turn with him in the Garden, and leading her into an Arbour covered with *Jeſſamine*, he thus began to tell her the unwelcome News that had been brought him, *My deareſt* Deidamia, *let me conjure you not to be troubled at what I am going now to tell you, but if you will oblige me, do it by ſhewing your Reſolution and Fortitude of Mind; and yet I cannot but own, That our Reſolves, like little Heaps of Sand, are quickly brought to nothing; but the Decrees of Heaven, like the Foundations of the Earth, are fix'd for ever. 'Twas in this very Arbour, my deareſt* Deidamia, *that I reſolved to ſtay at Home with thee, and not return to the Campaign in* Flanders; *and I appeal to him who knows my Heart, how*

firmly

firmly I intended; but see here, how I am forced against my Will to break my Resolutions; (and with that he shewed her the Commission the King had sent him to be Colonel of the Regiment of *Picardy*) *and now you see, my* Deidamia, *the Necessity that lies upon me to leave you for a Time; but though our Bodies be divided, we will have yet one Soul, and Love, whilst Providence denies us to live together. And whilst I in the Field am fighting for my Country, you shall stay here, and pray for my Success: And if it pleases God that I return, (which I don't doubt at all, for Heaven I'm sure will hear your fervent Prayers) 'twill be a new Addition to my Joy, to lay those Lawrels I shall win in Battle at* Deidamia's *Feet.* Poor *Deidamia* heard this heavy News with a sad Heart, but answered with Piety and Prudence worthy of her self, That since what happened was not of his seeking, but what the Providence of God had called him to, she thought it was her Duty, though she could hardly do it without Reluctancy, to aquiesce in the Divine Disposal of all human Actions, and wou'd Endeavour to stifle her Resentments, rather than give him any farther Trouble. *Alanson* being no less pleas'd with *Deidamia*'s Prudence than her kind

kind Affection, which he expreſſed by ſeveral Tender Things he told her, applyed himſelf to the getting ready of his Equipage, in order to his Departure; and the Settling the Affairs of his Family; Ordering *Antonio* his Chaplain, who was a Fryar of the Order of St. *Francis*, to ſay a ſolemn Maſs for his Succeſs in the Field, and the Protection of his Lady and Family in his Abſence; Recommending his deareſt *Deidamia* to the Care of *Antonio* his Chaplain, and *Fronovius* his Steward of his Houſhold, in theſe Words, *To your Care in my Abſence, I recommend the Safety and Welfare of my beloved Lady the moſt virtuous and loving of Wives; and Charge you, as you expect to Anſwer it to God and me, be Obedient to all her Commands, Comfort and Cheriſh her in her Solitude, and ſee that all my Domeſticks pay the like exact Reſpects:* This and much more they faithfully promiſed to obſerve. Then giving Liberally to each Servant, and having Notice that his Equipage was ready, and divers Gentlemen on Horſe-back waited to accompany him, he took his ſolemn Leave of his dear *Deidamia*, whoſe ſad preſaging Heart was overcome with Grief to that Degree, that ſhe could only ſpeak theſe few

few Prophetick Words, *Ah! my Dear Lord! may Heaven prevent my Fears! But my poor Heart fore-bodes that this will be a long and fatal Parting?* To which the Count replied, Do not caſt down thy ſelf, Dear *Deidamia*, by the indulging of ſuch Melancholy Fancies; but aſſure your ſelf, I'll haſten my Return as much as poſſible, and I will ſend to you as often as I can. And in the mean Time ſhall commit you to the Protection of the Almighty, the bleſſed Virgin Mother, and all the Holy Saints and Angels; and ſo embracing of her in his Arms, and Sealing his Affections on her Lips with gentle Kiſſes, he took his leave of her, and rid away; not thinking he had left an Innocent Dove to the Protection of two Ravenous Vultures.

It is not much to my Purpoſe to tell you, how well he was received at the Head of his Command by the Duke of *Luxemburg*, or what brave Exploits his Courage carried him through, ſince neither Fame nor the Publick News from *Paris* have been wanting to ſpeak his Commendation: I therefore omit it, (unleſs in ſome Paſſages, where it will, in the Thread of this amazing Relation, be neceſſary to mention ſome Particulars)

lars) and ſhall continue with the ſorrowful *Deidamia*, who after his Departure, ſeemed to have baniſhed all Comfort from her Breaſt; all that ſhe found was in her Devotions and Prayers to Almighty God, for his Protection and ſafe Return, greatly affecting Solitude; and as much as ſhe could, avoided the Viſits of divers Ladies, who (as they ſay) came to make her Merry, and divert her Melancholy, ſhe being very well *Beloved*, both by the Nobility and Gentry for her comely Carriage, modeſt Behaviour, ſweetneſs of Temper, and Affability.

In the cool of the Day ſhe uſually made it her Buſineſs to retire into her Garden, Penſive and alone; it being by the Care and Diligence of the Gardener, kept and ordered like another *Paradiſe*, ſtored with great Variety of choice Plants and Flowers, adorned with pleaſant Fountains, and ſeveral delightful Arbours, ſhaded over with Intertwining *Jeſſamine*, in one of which ſhe and her abſent Lord had paſſed ſome Joyful, as well as ſad Hours, and at the Remembrance of them would ſadly Weep, then Pray (according to the Cuſtom of the *Papiſts*, who allow praying to Saints) to the Tutelary Saints for his

Pro-

Protection: And so drying up her Tears, would walk thence again, taking but little Rest in any Place: But one Time passing by a Bed of Tulips, she espied *Bernard* her Gardener (for so was he called) busie in Watering them, and erecting such as declined their drooping Heads, occasioned by the Heat of the Sun's too scorching Beams; she had often in this Man observed a harmless Native Innocence, accompanied with Acute Ingenuity, (and indeed, a Gardener, who understands his Business as he ought to do, must be an ingenious Man) and therefore imagined it might Administer to her some Advantages to hold Discourse with him, in what related to the Mystery of Gardening, thinking it no Undervaluing, though he was her menial Servant, since she had often Read, That *Kings, Princes, and other great and wise Men, had voluntarily become of this Occupation: That* Adam, *when Governor of all the World, was imployed in it by God himself*; so that coming close to him, whilst his Hands were busied at his Work; the Man by his Ear, (his Back being towards her) being informed of some Body's approach, suddenly started up, and seeing his beautiful Lady so near him, was a little surpriz'd,

priz'd, and would have retired to give her the more Freedom in her Walks; but she prevented him, by saying, *Bernard, Pray don't let me hinder you in your Business; I come on purpose to observe your Dexterity in Gardening: I see you mind it with a just Diligence, though your Lord is Absent. Madam,* (replied he) *I beg your Ladyship's Pardon, in that I tell you, I am no Eye-servant, as well knowing I must give an Account to God, as well as to Man, if I am Negligent in what I promise to perform, and am intrusted with.* *Deidamia* stood surprized at the Man's plain, but ingenious Reply; and changing somewhat the Manner of her Discourse, asked him divers Questions about the *Virtues, Natures, Quality,* and *Production* of *Flowers* and *Plants,* &c. in all which he satisfied her to her Admiration; by which she perceived him *better learned in the Mysteries of Nature, than she expected from one of his Profession.* And to be brief, she often held such innocent Conversation with him, when at any Time she found him busie in the Garden; being much delighted to hear him Discourse how much of the Wisdom and Goodness of God might be learned from the Works of Creation; for he had a peculiar faculty

of

of Spiritualizing his Employment; and making his Buſineſs ſerve, like *Jacob*'s Ladder, to carry him from Earth to Heaven. Which ſome times cauſed her to reflect, that this Man was ſomething more than he appeared to be, (in which indeed ſhe was not much miſtaken) ſo that entertaining a good Opinion of him, ſhe ordered his Lodging to be changed for a better; and his courſe and homely Commons to be enlarged, above what was uſual to thoſe of his Profeſſion and Degree.

But now *Antonio* the Chaplain, However he had appeared like a Saint to his Maſter, began to ſhew himſelf a Devil to his Miſtreſs, and too plainly ſhewed his Cloven Foot; for tho' above Fifty Years of Age, he had for ſome Time harboured luſtful Deſires towards the Fair and Beautious *Deidamia*, that he was now reſolved to attempt her Chaſtity. And tho' her Virtue and her ſpotleſs Chaſtity might very well have kept him from purſuing his unclean Deſires, yet he flattered himſelf with Hopes of obtaining his End by corrupting her Judgment: In which he found himſelf very much miſtaken, as the Sequel will declare. For the Divine Goodneſs had a farther Work to do for

Deidamia;

Deidamia; who being altogether ignorant of what this Wretch designed againſt her Honour, frequented her beloved Garden, as ſhe uſed to do; and one Evening hearing the Gardener reading in a lonely Arbour, where he thought himſelf ſecure (for he had induſtriouſly concealed his being a *Proteſtant* from any of the Family) her Curioſity to hear him, made her draw nigh ſo ſoftly that he could not hear her: He was then reading the firſt Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, from the 20th to the End of the 23d Verſe, *viz. For the inviſible Things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head; ſo that they are without Excuſe: becauſe that when they knew God, they Glorified him not as God, neither were Thankful but became vain in their Imaginations, and their fooliſh Hearts were darkned: Profeſſing themſelves to be Wiſe, they became Fools, and changed the Glory of the Uncorruptible God, into an Image made like to Corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four footed Beaſts, and creeping Things.*

Having thus far proceeded, he pauſed, and with Eyes lifted up to Heaven, gave Glory unto God, that he had preſerved him

him Blameleſs from theſe Offences againſt his Divine Majeſty, which through Ignorance and Superſtition had over-ſpread the greateſt Part of *Europe: O Lord*, continued he, *I humbly beſeech thee, as I have already ſuffered Perſecution for thy Names ſake, and for the Sake of a good Conſcience, ſo never let me depart from the Ways of thy Truth, to change thy Incorruptible Glory into an Image made like Corruptible Man:* And when he had ſaid this; Tears ſtood in his Eyes, and his Words were ſucceeded by Sighs, and then by Silence.

Deidamia, who had all this while attentively liſtened, found ſomething in her Mind, that made a ſudden uneaſy Alteration, and thought to have gone away undiſcovered; but then again, her Zeal for the *Romiſh* Religion; which ſhe thought he had Reproached, by deteſting Image-worſhip, carried her ſo far, as ſhe reſolved to give him a ſharp Reprimand; leſt he perſiſting farther, until diſcovered by others, might Ruin himſelf, tho' her Goodneſs and gentle Nature was not for working him any Injury by revealing it. But never was Man more ſurpriz'd than *Bernard* when he ſaw her, whom at that Time of Day he little ſuſpected, as not being uſual! yet collect-

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ing his ſcattered Senſes, he aroſe from his Seat, and withal endeavoured to hide his *Bible* under his Coat, thinking ſhe had been newly come, and might neither heave heard him Read, nor ſeen his *Bible*, but ſhe in a frowning Manner, contrary to the wonted ſweetneſs of her Temper, commanded him to deliver it to her, that the Flames might conceal his Fault; and told him, ſhe would not for that Time, diſcover his being converſant with a Book ſo ſtrictly by the *Church* prohibited to the *Layety*; for continued ſhe, it is enough that we Believe as the *Church* Believes without farther Diſpute, of puzling our ſelves with thoſe Scruples and Niceties, which in all probability we may make a falſe Conſtruction of, and wreſt even thoſe Scriptures that are the Rule of our Faith, to our own Damnation.

This ſmart Diſcourſe, and the Frowns in the Fair *Deidamia*'s Countenance, did not in this Caſe ſo much daunt *Bernard*, as in another of leſs concern it might have done; but with ſome aſſurance, he reply'd, Ah, Madam! I little thought of being ſurpriz'd by you at my Devotions; but ſince I am, I cannot grant what you Demand; rather you may Command my

Body to the Flames, and as a willing Martyr I will ſooner go, than betray the Cauſe of God, in delivering up his holy Word to be conſumed, in which is contained all Things neceſſary to Salvation; and it ſhould be in me an apparent Contempt of that Salvation, ſhould I voluntarily, or through Fear, caſt it from me. As to your ſaying, *Madam*, That the *Church* has prohibited the *Layety* the Uſe of this ſacred *Book*, eſpecially in a known Tongue, I readily Grant it; but, O moſt virtuous Lady, you little know their Policy in that, it is not that they fear or care what Miſ-conſtructions Men make of it; becauſe it is like Arrows in the Hand of a Giant, ſtrong againſt their Worldly Intereſt, plainly diſcovering their Errors, groſs Idolatries. —— He would have proceeded, but heat of Zeal prompted her haſtily to Interrupt him, ſaying, Surely *Bernard*, you are diſtracted, or elſe, what's worſe, a *Heretick*: I took you to be Wiſer and more Reaſonable when I diſcourſed you the other Day. Truly, *Madam*, replied he, as for my being in my right Senſes, I bleſs Almighty God, he has in his Mercy hitherto continued them to me; and for my being a *Heretick*, Pardon me, if St. *Paul* anſwers

ſwers for me, when he was accuſed before *Felix*, ſaying, *But this I confeſs unto thee, after the Way which they call Hereſie, ſo Worſhip I the God of my Fathers; believing all Things that are Written in the Law and the Prophets.* Upon this, *Deidamia*, who by Nature was all Goodneſs, Gentleneſs, and Affableneſs, began to moderate her Anger, and to conſider a little what he had ſaid; yet her Zeal for the Religion ſhe profeſſed, made her mildly Rebuke him, and lay before him the Danger he was in, if his Opinion was diſcovered; bidding him be Cautious and Wiſe in what he did; though for her Part he need not fear but ſhe would lock up what ſhe had diſcovered, in her Breaſt, and it ſhould paſs no farther; and ſo departed, left him in ſome Confuſion.

Deidamia retiring to her Chamber, began to conſider what had paſſed, and remembred ſhe had often wept in her tender Years, when ſhe heard the Cruelties the *Roman Catholicks* uſed towards the *Hugenots* or *Proteſtants* in *France*; and diſapproved of their perſecuting Spirit, as not of God; whoſe chiefeſt Attribute is *Mercy*, tender *Compaſſion*, and *Forgiveneſs*; who on the contrary, ſhe found thoſe who made Religion ſo much their Boaſt,

ſo very Cruel, that far from the Inſtance of our Saviour's refuſing to call for Fire from Heaven to Conſume thoſe that had injuriouſly and deſpightfully uſed him, they made their very Worſhip and Devotions a Snare, to bring thoſe under their cruel Handlings, who had no wiſe Offended them, but in being ſeparated from them, and moving according to the Dictates of their Conſcience. She had likewiſe obſerved the Harmleſſneſs and Inoffenſive Manner of Living in the Perſecuted, and often ſhewed ſome diſlike of the Looſneſs and Unchriſtian Practices of the Perſecutors; ſo that although ſhe had a good Opinion of the *Romiſh* Religion, as having been brought up in it from her Infancy, yet had ſhe not ſo of many of the Profeſſors of it, who apparently Derogated from the Ways of Virtue, and ſeemed to encourage Vice.

This wrought ſome Labourings in her Mind, through the Gracious Operation of the holy Spirit; and in her Night-Thoughts more ſeriouſly reflecting on many Things, and particularly on the Gardener's Expreſſion out of St. *Paul*'s Words to *Felix* the Governour, inferring from thence, That it muſt be the Sincerity of the Heart towards God, more than

than the Shew or outward Name, or Profeſſion of any Religion, that renders the Perſon acceptable in his Sight. In the midſt of theſe Cogitations and Debates within her ſelf, ſhe found ſomething (as 'twere by an over-ruling Power) ſtrongly move her to a Deſire of farther Converſing with *Bernard*, about the *Fundamentals* of his *Religion*; which by the *Popiſh Prieſts*, as well in their *Pulpits*, as private Converſation, had been repreſented ſo Odious, Damnable, and to be deteſted.

The Morning no ſooner ſummon'd the Gardener to Viſit his *Flowers* and *Plants*, and perform his uſual Task in Watering and Ordering 'em; but *Deidamia*, who had taken little Reſt that Night, aroſe; and having performed her Oriſons, and then refreſhing her ſelf with a moderate Refection, took an Opportunity between that and Dinner-time to enter the Garden privately, at a Door that opened into it from her Apartment; and to Skreen the better what ſhe intended, from prying Eyes, took divers Turns, and gathered *Poſies* of *Flowers*, and then Fanning her ſelf as if the Heat offended her, paſſing many Winding Alleys, overſpread with pleaſant Shades, ſhe came

to the before-mentioned Arbour, and again ſurprized the Gardener in his Meditations: The Man was not under any Conſternation at her coming, but riſing and bowing low, would have departed out of good Manners to give her the ſole Freedom of that pleaſant Bower; but ſhe laid her Commands on him to ſtay, ſaying, She had conſidered of his former Diſcourſe, and had made it her Buſineſs to find him out, that he might give her ſome better Reaſon for the Opinion he held, than yet he had done.

His Modeſty, and the humble Thoughts he conceiv'd of himſelf, would ſcarce give him leave to ſit down, though ſhe often Commanded him ſo to do; but at laſt he complied, and then ſhe asked him, *Upon what Ground and Foundation the Baſis of his Religion was fixed.*

Gardener. It is founded on the Scriptures of the Old and New *Teſtament*, which were written by Men inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, and given for our Inſtruction and Learning; it is only the Word of God that can Warrant the Truth of any Poſſeſſion in Religious Matters: and that we *Proteſtants* (through God's Aſſiſtance) Labour to Conform, and Live up to.

Deidamia. *Ay, but you may be miſtaken in the miſinterpreting the Scriptures, and fall into groſs Hereſies, as our Church charges you; and therefore has ſtrictly forbid the Layety of our Communion to meddle with them, leſt, like Weapons put into the Hands of Idots, or Madmen, they injure themſelves and others thereby.*

Gard. Ah! Lady, ſhall I be free, and deal plainly with you in this point?

Deid. *With all my Heart, let me hear what you can ſay in Anſwer to it?*

Gard. All Scriptures are given for our Learning, God is willing we ſhould know his revealed Will, that we may be the better enabled to perform it. St. *Paul* commends the *Bereans*, and calls them *Noble*, becauſe they ſearched the Scriptures, to ſee whether the Things they heard were ſo or no; and we have many Commands for this; as, *Seek ye the Book of the Lord and Read*, Iſai. 34. 16. *They were more Noble, in that they ſearched the Scripures daily*, Acts 17. 11. *Let the Word of God dwell richly in you*, Col 3. 16. *From a Child thou haſt known the Scriptures*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. *Take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, Eph. 6. 17. And many others that I might mention, which are to be found in the Scriptures; and

this not commanded to *Some*, but to *All* that seek Salvation.

Deid. *Certainly if our Church have seen this fit, they would not have denied it; but being dangerous to Souls, it ought to be restrained.*

Gard. It is indeed dangerous to break God's Commandments, and to teach Men so to do, and to make the Word of God of none effect by Human Tradition. We know the *Woes* Christ pronounced against the *Pharisees* for these Things.

Deid. *Why, who are guilty of this? The Church of* Rome, *the Holy Catholick Church, as it has many Ages been stiled, is surely Unspotted of such Crimes.*

Gard. I wish I could say it was not, but it deeply is Guilty, as in many other Particulars, so most eminently in this, That it professes no Man is obliged to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, or to believe any of it, but for the Testimony of your Church; and to awe Men to such a Belief, Threats of Damnation are used; as well as the Magistrates Swords, and cruel Torments by *Inquisitions*; and indeed it is not done without Ground: This is done to hinder prying into their grosse Idolatries, Errors and Superstitions,

perſtitions, derogatory to the Scriptures, and expreſs Command of God.

Deid. *Sure you are beſides your ſelf: Nor can you prove this; but being fallen from the Church, do this only in Prejudice and Spight, to lay a Stain upon its Virgin Innocence.*

Gard. No; it is apparent from the Word of God, and even from Reaſon it ſelf, in thoſe that will Conſider, and are not blinded with Ignorance, which your Church in her Senſe truly ſtiles the *Mother of Devotion.*

Deid. *Can any ſuch Thing be in a Church that is Infallible? And to prove that it is ſo, it is ſaid to be built upon St.* Peter; *he is the* Rock *ſpoken of; and this* Rock *doth, together with St.* Peter, *include his Succeſſors, and the Church built on this* Rock *(that is united to, and built upon the Pope) is Infallible; for it is ſaid.* The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

Gard. Pardon me, Lady, if I ſay, There is no Agreement among the Church-men about this Infallible Judge; ſome will have it the *Pope,* ſome a *General Council,* and others both; none of your Writers have yet concluded on it. However, theſe Words are perverted; for it is more probable, that not *Peter's Perſon,* but his

Doctrine or *Confession* concerning *Christ*, is the *Rock* upon which the Church is built. Scripture is its best Interpreter: It is not *Peter*, but *Christ*, is the Foundation of the Church, as here in my *Bible* you may see, by the 28th Chapter and 16th Verse of *Isaiah*, compared with 1 *Pet.* 2. 6, 7, 8. which you may please to read, [*which she did.*] It is moreover expressly said, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. *Other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* And this is the more considerable, because he speaks against those that made the *Apostles* to be Foundations, saying, *I am of* Paul, *another of* Apollos, *or* Cephas; and if this is spoke of *Peter*, no more is said of him here, than is spoke of all the Prophets and Apostles, *Ephes.* 2. 20. *Ye are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.*

Deid. *Well, I am not much learned in this Mystery; but, pray, what as Erroneous can you assign in our Worship, or any other Thing the Church holds, as absolutely necessary?*

Gard. The paying Divine Adoration to *Angels* and *Saints*, expressly contrary to God's Commands, and derogatory to his Honour, who alone ought to be worshipped in Heaven and Earth; and to wor-

ship

ſhip any other, either Saint or Angel, or any Creature, is Idolatry, and a Breach of the Second Commandment.

Deid. *Nay, not too haſt ; we do not worſhip the Angels and Saints as God, with the higheſt Worſhip which is only proper to God; but with an inferiour Kind of Religious Worſhip, that they may preſent our Supplications to him.*

Gard. There is no Interceſſor or Mediator but Chriſt Jeſus, who is appointed to perform that Office; *If any Man want Wiſdom, let him ask of God*, James 1. 5. Neither of Saints nor Angels. *Come to me*, ſaith our Saviour, *and I will in no wiſe caſt you out.* This free Invitation ſhows us, he alone is to receive our Petitions, and preſent them to his Father. There is alſo *Image-worſhip* brought cunningly by *Prieſts*, to gain Worldly Advantage; and pretended Miracles, to draw the Ignorant to pay their Devotion more at one Place than at another, impoſing on the Ignorant for Lucre ſake. I could ſay much more, but I fear to Offend you.

Deid. *No, you do not: But let us come nearer to the main Controverſie. What think you of Tranſubſtantiation? Is not Chriſt Corporally preſent in the Sacrament?*

Gard. It is a Misrepresentation of our Saviour's Words; for if he had so meant, as the Church of *Rome* hold it, when he brake the Bread, he must have held himself in his own Hands, and Eat himself yet still sit whole and entire at the Table; his whole Body must be in the Mouth of every Communicant at once, and that Body in Millions of Places at a Time, broken and unbroken, and be subject to Putrefraction; and therefore the Words, *This is my Body*, doth only intend, *This doth signifie my Body:* And upon the same Account our Saviour is called a *Door*, a *Rock*, a *Vine*; yet none can be so void of Understanding, to believe he was turned into any of these. And therefore when he brake the Bread, and gave the Cup, he did it only, that when Christian Congregations were met on Solemn Occasions to Celebrate his Worship, they should do it in Remembrance of him, till his coming in Glory at the last Day, as the immediate Words explain; and it is absurd to believe that the *Priest*'s uttering a few Words over a Wafer, can make it a God, or that Body offered on the Cross?

Deid. *You amaze me: But pray what do you hold about* Purgatory? *Is there such a Place,*

Place, where Souls are to endure their Purgations after Death, that go not immediately to Heaven, and by Masses and Prayer may be releas'd sooner or later.

Gard. It is a Tradition lately brought in, and with it hath brought much increase of Wealth to the Church. The Word of God allows only Heaven for those who shall be made Vessels of Mercy; and Hell for those whose Sins have provoked him to cast them down to those dismal Regions of Sorrow, and Eternal Woe: No Prayers after Death being available.

Deid. *These Notions are as New as Strange to me, have you any Authentick Proof for this?*

Gard. Yes; The revealed Word of God is a sacred Proof beyond all Denial: *The Rich Man in Hell lifted up his Eyes being in Torment*; Luke 16. 23. *They shall sit down with* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob, *in the Kingdom of Heaven, but the other shall be cast into utter Darkness, where shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth*; Matth. 28. 12. *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*, Matth. 26. 16. Here is no such Thing as a *Purgatory* to be found; it is only the Blood of Christ that purgeth us from our Sins; and

and from all Uncleanneſs of Fleſh and Spirit, to preſent our Souls Blameleſs and Unſpotted to his Father: By this I underſtand thoſe that Die in the Lord, need not our Prayers, and thoſe that Die in their Sins no Prayers can avail them; for in the Grave there is no Repentance: *As the Tree falls, ſo it muſt lie, whether it falls towards the North, or towards the South, where it falls there it muſt lie.* There is only two Extreams, North and South, no middle Way, or Purgatory for it to fall in. And as Death leaves us, ſo Judgment will aſſuredly find us.

He would have proceeded, but ſhe ſtopt him, ſaying, *Pray how long have you been of this Opinion?*

Gard. Ever ſince God was pleaſed to Enlighten me with his Grace, to be attentive to his holy Word, and to be guided by it.

Deid. *Was you ever then of the Church of* Rome?

Gard. In my younger Years I was, but through Mercy, being made ſenſible by the Scriptures of the Corruptions and Errors of that Church, by the Aſſiſtance of a worthy Divine, I hope with St. *Paul*, nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the Love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

ſus. I will not offend your Ladyſhip's chaſte Ears with the Hiſtory of the Debaucheries and wicked Lives of divers *Popes*, and moſt of the *Clergy*; but will pray Heaven to defend you from either their *Luſt* or *Revenge*. And ſince I have by a free Confeſſion put my Life in your Hands, I humbly Submit it to your Goodneſs, to ——

Here again ſhe interrupted him, and demanded, *Why the Religion he profeſſed was called the* Proteſtant Religion?

To which he replied, As for being ſo called, it is to diſtinguiſh it from that of the *Romiſh*; it came from ſeveral Princes and Cities of *Germany*, who upon the Preachings of good Men, and their Exemplary Lives, proteſted againſt the Uſurpations of the *Romiſh* Church and its Errors. That it was no New *Doctrine*, but the Truth of *Primitive Chriſtianity*, Confeſſed, Aſſerted, and Purged from the Corruptions of *Popery*, taking the revealed Will of God for its Guide.

At this *Deidamia* pauſed a while; and then taking his *Bible*, looked over the ſacred Proofs he had turned down in order; and her Colour went and came ſo, that he eaſily perceiv'd her Mind was labouring under ſome Difficulties, and

ſo

to giving it him again, she went away without speaking a Word.

This somewhat perplex'd the Gardener, as fearing she was displeased with what he had said; but her sending for him privately to her Chamber the next Morning, under the Notion of bringing her some choice Flowers, banisht all Fear in him; when they two being only left together, she gently led him into the Closet, and shutting the Door to be more Private, said, *O Bernard*, (fetching a deep Sigh, your Yesterday's Discourse has much broken my last Night's Rest; I have been Meditating on it, and find abundance of Reason in what you say; you have (as St. *Paul* said in another Case) *almost persuaded me to be of your Persuasion*: I wish to God, most Virtous Lady *(replied he)* I might be an humble Instrument in God's Hand, to do any Thing that may redound to his Glory, and the Good and Welfare of your Precious and Immortal Soul, without hazarding your Temporal Quiet and Peace, or exposing you to any Danger; tho' for a *Crown of Life and Immortality*, all Earthly Things are to be despised; and the holy Apostle accounts all this World's Good *but as Dross and Dung, in comparison of enjoying Christ Jesus*. Well,

(said

(said she) this is my Aim, and if God enable me with his assisting Grace, I hope, through his Mercy, to attain it. I have indeed *(continued she)* to my great Grief, observed the Loose and Profane Manner of Living of those that profess our Religion; alledging, that a *Confession*, with *Absolution*, and some other Works, will purge them from their Sins, and gain them that Blessedness in the End, which I could never Heartily believe they would obtain by them: And since I have more seriously considered God's Word, expressly to the contrary, I cannot believe that any thing but sincere and unfeigned Repentance in the Course of an unspotted Life, can purchase (through the Merits of my Saviour) those endless Glories and transcendent Blessings that God hath promised to poor Mortals. —— She would have proceeded, but the falling Tears stopt her utterance, and *Bernard* had an inward Rejoicing to see her brought to this pass; whereupon he comforted her with good Advice, and the Cordials of God's Mercies and Promises. In brief, he had made her sensible of the Errors she had been brought up in, and then opened (from point to point) the Cheat of pretended Miracles, and Relicks, the impo-

impoſing on People with Pardon and Indulgence to get Money, the Whoredoms, Murders, and Inceſts of many *Popes*, *Cardinals*, and *Prelates* of the *Romiſh* Church; their Unreaſonableneſs in prohibiting *Prieſts* Marriage, which is immediately appointed by God, and the allowing them by *Canons* and *Decrees* the Embraces of Concubines, or to commit Adultery, expreſly contrary to the Command of the Almighty, for as much as he has expreſly ſaid, *Thoſe that do theſe Things ſhall not inherit Eternal Life.*— He would have proceeded, but hearing the Sound of Feet coming up Stairs, ſhe haſtened him down a back Way with ſo much Precipitation, that he left his *Bible* behind him, which ſhe luckily ſeeing, locked up in a *Scrutore*.

I have told you before, That Father *Antonio* the *Prieſt*, forgetting his Function, Duty, and Diſtance, gave way to his unruly and lawleſs Paſſion, and was then blundering up Stairs to find her in Private, having almoſt fluſtered himſelf with Wine on purpoſe either to be more confident in his wicked Deſign, to tell her the Story of his Nauſeous Love, or rather Luſt; or, that if being reproved, he might have ſome ſlender Excuſe for his

his Impertinency, and lay (as too many do) the blame of their Folly on that which is rather an Aggravation of their Crime, *i. e.* their *Drunkenneſs*; and ſo Surpriſing, however he came, that putting his Noſe over the Upper-ſtep, juſt as the Gardener poſted out at the private Door, he had a Glimpſe of the back Parts of his Garments, as it afterwards appeared; but at that Time took no Notice of any ſuch Thing. *Deidamia* ſeeing *Antonio* coming towards her in a very a pleaſant Humour, demanded with a modeſt Decency, what Occaſion brought him thither to diſturb her Retirement?

Ah! (ſaid the impudent *Prieſt*, who could not long keep down his boiling Paſſion) *your two fair Eyes, ſweet Lady, like Load-ſtones, have drawn me to you; that beauteous tempting Face of yours has made me forget my ſelf, with my Duty to my Lord, and the Truſt he repoſed in me.* Why certainly, ſaid *Deidamia*, (calling in her Patience to bridle her Paſſion) you are beſide your ſelf, *Antonio.* —— What mean you by this Kind of Diſcourſe? *If I am beſides my ſelf* (replied he almoſt crying) *your fair ſelf is the Cauſe of it, whoſe Beauty, like Arrows, have wounded my Heart, and ſickned my Brain; I wiſh I*

had

had never seen such Amiableness in Womankind; but since I have been so unfortunate as to be your Fettered Captive, take some Compassion on me, and ease my Sufferings. What Sufferings? replied *Deidamia*, frowning, or what can be the Sense of all this loose Stuff? *Why then*, (replied he) *to be serious, in plain Terms, I Love you; and that so passionately, that unless you condescend to make me suitable Returns, I shall have no Peace nor Quiet; but must be Miserable and Wretched Eternally.* Then (said she) be you so: What have you seen of any loose Misbecoming Behaviour in me, that you should dare to speak thus to me? This like a Thunder-bolt, struck him Mute; when smoothing her Brows, and growing a little Calmer, she said, Come, come, *Antonio*, I took you for another Man; you profess Sanctity, and admonish others to lead a holy Life; is this Pretension then Real, or is it only feigned, to try my Virtue? *I protest*, said he, lifting up both his Hands, *it is Real, and I cannot help it.* Why, said she, would you Commit such great Wickedness if you might, and make yourself guilty of a Crime so heinous? *Ah! Lady*, replied he, *if that be all, I can absolve you by the Power given me from the* See *of* Rome:

Consent

Conſent but to let me enjoy you, your Penance ſhall be always eaſie; I'll get a Diſpenſation for your Marriage Vows from the Pope, with Pardons, Indulgences, or any Thing, for Sins paſt, and thoſe that are to come: Nay, I'll do any thing, ſo I do not fall under your Diſpleaſure: Let me alone for the Reſt, and ——

This Inſolence ſo much diſpleaſed the Virtuous Lady, that ſhe could hear no more, nor bear it any longer; but commanded him out of her Preſence: Yet could not be rid of him, till ſhe threatned to call up the reſt of her Servants. Whereupon he went Muttering away; and for two Days after, as much as poſſible he could, he ſhunned coming into her Preſence; which much pleaſed her; for ſhe could not behold him but with Horror and Deteſtation.

This Attempt however, in one Senſe, (through the over-ruling *Providence* and *Goodneſs* of God, who is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in Working, and can make the greateſt Wickedneſs of his Creatures, ſerve the Purpoſe of his own Glory) worked to her *Advantage*; for ſhe *Believed* now all *true* which the Gardener had told her, about the Wicked Debauched *Lives* of the *Romiſh Clergy*, ſince this *Villanous Papiſt* had not Scrupled

led to profer the *Pope*'s Pardon for no leſs than *Adultery*, and that before it was committed; by which Means or Encouragement, ſhe plainly ſaw it muſt conſequently be that they frequently tempted eaſy and ignorant People to the Commiſſion of many Sins: Therefore ſhe reſolved to leave theſe *blind Guides*, and take the *Word of God* for her *Leader* and *Inſtructer*; forbearing to come to *Confeſſion* or hear *Maſs*, ſometimes upon pretence of Indiſpoſition, and at other Times purpoſely going Abroad, at the uſual Times of either; and holding ſome other Conferences with the Gardener, which (as to Particulars) for Brevity's ſake I muſt of neceſſity paſs over.

She found in her ſelf a ſtrange *Averſion* to the *Religion* ſhe had been brought up in; and having procured a *Bible* in the *French* Tongue, took ſuch delight in Reading it, that whenever ſhe had Time to Retire, it was not out of her Hand; yet ſhe kept this as ſecret as poſſible, and not being ready at it her ſelf, got the Gardener to turn her down ſuch Proofs, as were the *ſtrongeſt Arguments againſt the Errors of Popery, and where the Abominations of the Myſtical Babylon was pointed at.* This he joyfully did, and gave Praiſe to God,

who

who had made him Inſtrumental in ſo good a Work; tho' he was not ignorant, his Life was liable to pay for it, if it were diſcovered. She likewiſe laid aſide her *Beads* and *Crucifix*, converſed no more with *Roſaries*, or the *Legends of pretended Saints*; and though ſhe found ſome Temptations and Fears at the Beginning, yet frequently praying to God, ſhe overcame Satan's Wiles, and found abundance of Joy and Comfort enlightning her Soul, ſo that ſhe could not forbear breaking out into Raptures of Praiſes and Thankſgiving, for the wonderful Change (by ſo ſtrange and unexpected Means) wrought in her Soul.

Whilſt this Virtuous Lady and the Gardener held their private Correſpondence, in diſcourſing of the Things of God, and Incouraging and Exhorting each other to Perſeverance and Stedfaſtneſs in Truth, *Antono* and *Fronovius*, equally burning with Luſtful Deſires to enjoy the tender Beauties of the Fair *Deidamia*, were plotting and contriving how their Lawleſs Deſigns might beſt be brought about, tho' each plotted by himſelf, (for as yet they were ignorant of each other's Paſſion.) The Villanous *Prieſt* (as you have already heard) had been

been Repulſed with Indignation by the chaſte Lady, which inwardly tormented him, and brought him almoſt to his Wits End; but the other *(Fronovius)* had made no tryal of her Virtues, and waited a favourable Opportunity to do it; and therefore he thinks, meditates, and caſts many Things in his Mind, till at laſt (his Paſſion emboldening him) he was reſolved to break the Ice with a Letter; and if ſhe took no Notice of that, to Second it with his Perſonal Addreſs: But how he ſhould do this with Privacy and Safety, he was at a Stand for a Time; for he feared to truſt any Body to deliver it, leſt his Criminal Love ſhould take air; and to deliver it himſelf, would look too daſtardly, as if he was not capable, or at leaſt durſt not ſpeak for himſelf; however, in a little while he met with a fit Opportunity; for *Deidamia* accidentally dropping her Handkerchief, as ſhe paſſed through a large Gallery that led to her Appartment, he carefully took it up, and folding up is Letter in it (which he had readily ſealed by him) he gave it to her Gentlewoman to give it to her Lady, telling her he found it in the Long Gallery. The Gentlewoman knowing the Handkerchief to be her Ladies, immediately

diately carried it to her, who received it from her, without knowing any Thing of a Letter being in it; and afterwards accidentally taking the Handkerchief out of her Pocket, the Letter dropt out upon the Ground, which she taking up, and looking on the *Superscription*, was extremely surprized to find it directed to her self; and hastily opening it, was much more so, to find the *Contents* thereby as followeth:

PArdon me, most Lovely Deidamia, *if your Beauty makes me forget the Station I am in, and imboldens me to own a Passion I have laboured in Vain to hide*: *To be brief,* Dear Lady, *I am so Captivated by your Charms and singular Perfections, that I am constrained to say, I Love you infinitely above all Mortal Creatures; and since it appears to me Unreasonable any one Man should Monopolize so inestimable a Treasure, give me leave to Hope; and don't suffer me to Languish and Die, but render the Balm of your Kindness to Cure the Wounds which your bright Eyes have made in your . erways Wretched Servant,*

Frohovius.

The Reading of this Letter filled her with Bluſhes, Anger and Amazement, at the unparallelled Boldneſs and Villany of the Author of it, and at firſt was reſolving to commit it to Flames, or to tear it in Pieces, but upon ſecond Thoughts, ſhe laid it up in her Cloſet, where ſhe vexed and fretted her ſelf, that ſhe was thus left among ſuch ungrateful Wretches, that dared ſo much to ſuſpect her Virtues, and meaſure them by their own wicked and filthy Inclination, as to preſume ſhe would defile her Marriage-Bed; being more grieved for this Diſcovery, than the Former; for ſhe knew the Prieſt had ſomething of the Libertine in him, but this Man ſhe had held to be Honeſt and Virtuouſly inclin'd till now; and to him ſhe thought to have diſcovered *Antonio*'s Folly, if he perſited in it; that by Shame and Reproofs he might have Reclaimed him. But now ſhe ſcarce knew who to truſt; and could not therefore but tremble at the Apprehenſions of ſome Violence that might be offered her from thoſe Luſtful Miſcreants, whoſe Sight now very much diſpleaſed her. She thought once or twice of diſplacing hem; but found their Authority in the Family was ſo great, that in her Lord's Abſence

Abſence ſhe could not do it: Whereupon ſhe fell on her Knees to implore God's Mercy and Protection, Commending her ſelf wholly to his Care and Providence, and begging of Him to be her Guardian and Protector.

Though *Deidamia*'s Mind on thoſe Surprizing Attempts on her Honour, was variouſly Toſſed, ſhe at laſt came to a ſettled Reſolution Prudently to Conceal what had paſſed, at leaſt till her Lord came Home, for fear of Scandal and Diſturbance: Yet *Fronovius* might well read in her Countenance whenever he came into her Preſence, that ſhe had read his Letter, and how ſhe reſented it; which made him ſtruggle to overcome his Paſſion, but in Vain; for like Oyl thrown on Fire, the Oppoſition his lewd Deſires met with, made them burn the fiercer; ſo that he reſolved to find an Opportunity to throw himſelf at her Feet, and diſcover his Paſſion to her by Word of Mouth; and whilſt he waited for a convenient Time and Place to do it, he perceived the Gardener often to come in and go out very chearful, as highly pleaſed and contented; and that though he only carried her Fruits and Flowers, yet his Frantick Paſſion and Jealouſie made him

believe there was ſomething more in it. *Antonio* the Prieſt had alſo obſerved the like, and had much the ſame Sentiments, which emboldened them the more to Perſiſt in their wicked and unclean Deſires, and to continue to Perſecute the chaſte Lady with their deteſted Proffers of lawleſs Love; concluding, that if one of ſo low a Rank could be in Favour, they in Time could not miſs of obtaining what they ſought; and ſo blinded with Paſſion, and purſuing what they aimed at (though, as has been ſaid, unknown to each other) they kept a watchful Eye upon the Actions of *Deidamia*, whoſe Mind was taken up in Contemplating the Divine Perfections of him who is Fairer than the Children of Men, being every Day more confirmed in the Truth of her Religion, bleſſing and praiſing God, that by ſo wonderful and unexpected a Means had brought her out of Darkneſs and Errors, into the Marvellous Light of his Truth, and engaged her Heart to Embrace and Entertain it above her chief Joy; partly looking on the Trouble ſhe had from *Antonio* and *Fronovius*, thoſe Brethren in Iniquity, as Temptation or Tryals to Confirm her the more, by overcoming them, in the

Doctrine

Doctrine she had so lately Embraced; in which she firmly resolved to persevere against all Temptations whatever.

But whilst these Things passed, *Fronovius* had received no other Answer to his Letter, but *Deidamia*'s Angry and much-changed Countenance towards him, which he would not take for an absolute Repulse, and therefore was resolved to have her positive Answer: To obtain which, as *Deidamia* was one Morning leaning upon the Window in her Chamber, and looking into the Garden, he stole softly up Stairs, and was got into her Chamber just behind her, before she heard him, when suddenly turning about, and seeing him in a Dejected Posture, she was very much Supriz'd and Trembled at the Sight; whilst he by many Words endeavour'd to shew the Greatness of his Passion; but having somewhat recollected her Spirits, she with an angry Countenance, spake to him thus: *Why, how now* Fronovius? *What Business have you here, thus to steal into my Chamber Unawares? This is such an Effront Piece of Impudence and Rudeness, as better becomes a Thief than the Steward of my Household; and yet the filthy Errant that you come on, is far more Criminal than your coming: What have you*

ever seen of Lightness in my Carriage that should make you thus Audacious, or give you the least Hope to succeed in your Unlawful and Wicked Desires? I command you to be gone: and know, that if you persist in your Impudence and Folly, I will speedily take those Methods, that shall issue in your deserved Shame and Confusion.

He would have replied, but she forthwith went out of her Chamber, and would not hear him.

This absolute Denial and severe Reprimand; filled *Fronovius* full of Confusion, and had almost made him hopeless; but after some Recollection, he strongly Fancied, that the Opposition he met with, proceeded not from the Lady's Virtue, but from the greater Inclination she had to some Rival, who enjoyed those Favours which he had been pursuing; and he supposed the Gardener to be the Man, because he had received some particular Marks of her Favours since the Departure of the Count *Alanson*. Being thus persuaded, he was resolved (if it were possible) to make a plain Discovery: and to this End, he Planted himself Privately one Evening near the Back Stairs, that led out of the Garden into *Deidamia*'s Apartment (for that Way he thought his sup-

ſuppoſed Rival muſt come.) And indeed he had not waited long, before a Perſon came by, and went up thoſe Stairs; whom he ſoftly followed to the Stair-foot; the Darkneſs of the Night hindered him, from Diſcerning who the Perſon was that went by him, but he doubted not but it was the Gardener, and having liſtened at the Bottom of the Stairs, hearing no Door open, nor no Key to turn, he imagined the Door was left open on purpoſe, and therefore reſolved to go up himſelf, and Surprize them in the very Act of their unlawful Love: He had no ſooner reſolved this, but he heard ſome Body coming ſoftly down Stairs; as ſoon as the Perſon came to the Bottom of the Stairs, *Fronovius* boldly Siezes on him, and Demands what Buſineſs he had there at that late Time of Night? But was extreamly Surprized to meet with, inſtead of *Bernard* the Gardener, *Antonio* the Prieſt; whom then *Fronovius* thought had been with *Deidamia*. Upon which, ſpeaking big Words to *Antonio*, and threatning to kill him for the Diſhonour he had done his Lord, in Violating of his Bed: The Poor *Prieſt* (who was almoſt Dead with Fear, and extreamly Confounded at this Accident)

tremblingly told *Fronovius*, That if he would ſave his Life, he would Ingeniouſly tell him all he knew: Which *Fronovius* promiſing, *Antonio* told him the Story of his Love Addreſſes, violent Paſſion, and the Repulſes he met with: That however being Jealous of the Gardener, and not finding him in his Lodging (for it ſeems *Deidamia* had newly appointed him another, unknown to *Antonio*) he ſuſpected he might be with his Lady; where deſiring to Detect him, and bring him to puniſhment, he had undertaken to come at this Unſeaſonable Time; but the Doors being faſt Locked, and after a long Liſtening, hearing no Stir nor Whiſpering, was returning back again to watch a more favourable Opportunity, that he might not on ſlight Ground or Uncertainty, lay ſuch a Thing to their Charge.

Fronovius finding the Prieſt had been Repulſed and Reproved as well as he, and that his Thoughts were the ſame with his as to the ſuſpected Rival, having huſhed his preſent Fears, and declared to him, though ſomewhat Darkly, his own Affections, *&c.* They went to *Antonio*'s Chamber where they entered into a Combination ſo Helliſh and Malicious

cious, that it brought many Woes and Miseries, both to the Virtuous *Deidamia*, and the Gardener, till by the Mercy of God, to the Shame and Confusion of the Contrivers, they were turned to Blessings, to rejoyce the injured, and clear their Innocence, after many inexpressible Sufferings.

Whilst these wicked Men were thus Plotting to Revenge their Repulses, *Deidamia* was thoughtful of her Safety: Sometimes she determin d to Write to *Alanson*, to remember his Promise and hast his Return; but then she concluded, that though his Presence might reform these Disorders, yet to desert his Command upon any private Occasion, would Derogate from his Honour; and then she considered, that she could not hide from him the Religion she had Embraced since his Departure, for she could not Dissemble if she was taxed with it; and tho' his Company were dear to her, yet the Enjoyment of the other was more Precious and Preferable; and that in Comparison of the Love of Christ, all the Love in the World was but of little Value. At another Time she thought of Retiring to her Parents: but this she fancied would be displeasing to her Lord,

that in his Absence she should leave the Government of his Family, which he had trusted to her Care at his Departure; these Things seriously Weighed, she resolved to remain at Home, thinking Time would cure the wild Disorders that were in the Minds of those two wicked Servants.

After this last Resolve, she retired to her Closet, where she had not been long e'er the Gardener came to present her with a Paper he had drawn up by her Order, of the Fundamental Points of the Protestant Religion, in Opposition to Popery, one being compared with the other, and tryed by Scripture and the Fathers of the Primitive Times: She accepted this Paper very kindly, promising to look it over at her Leisure, as a Matter she had much desired to be informed in. Whereupon he retired to his Labour in the Garden, whilst a Bribed Spie, their Enemies had set on the Watch, was run giving Information of the Gardener's being with his Lady; *Fronovius* was out of the Way, but *Antonio* hasted as fast as he could, and softly opening the Spring-Lock, impudently entered the Chamber, drawing the Curtains of her Bed, in hopes of finding what he looked

for

for there; but missing his Purpose, he stole to the Side of her Closet, directed thither by her Voice; for the Pious Lady was fallen on her Knees, and fervently pouring out her Soul to God in in these Words:

O Most blessed God, thou who art the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolations, I bless and Praise thy holy Name, that thou hast enlightned the Eyes of my Understanding with the Knowledge of thy blessed Truth, and that thou hast Delivered me from that Darkness and Ignorance, and these Antichristian Errors, wherein I have lived since my Childhood, and hast revealed the Saving Knowledge of thy Will unto me, as it is contained in thy blessed Word the Holy Scriptures: O strengthen my Heart in the Profession of thy Truth, and grant that I may never return back again to the Popish Idolatry and Superstition, nor be under the Conduct of those blind Guides any more, whatever Sufferings and Tryals I may be liable to, or may undergo on that Account.

These Pious Breathings of her Soul, *Antonio* to his great Amazement heard, and knew not what to think, whether he should discover himself or retire,

but at last wickedly supposing the Fear she should conceive, lest he should discover what she had uttered against the *Romish Religion*, or that, as he concluded, she was turned *Hugenot* (as they call *Protestants)* might induce her to comply with his Lust, he presented himself before her, rudely opening her Closet-door e're she had Time to rise from her Knees. This continued Impudence of his much troubled her Spirits; whereupon, rising hastily, she forcibly pulled the Door, after she had given him a Thrust-back, and Lock'd her self in. However, it unhappily fell out, that in this Disorder, not taking that Care, as at another Time she would have done, that Paper which the Gardener had newly brought her, with her hasty shutting the Door, dropt out of her Coat, and unperceived by her, was shut out of the Closet, which *Antonio* took carefully up, and put in his Pocket telling her (tho' the Door was shut against him) he had heard how she Apostatized from her Religion, and how wickedly she had spoken of the holy *Roman Catholick Church*, and what Mischiefs he could do her, if he should discover it; yet for the Love he bore her, if she would yield to ease his Passion, it should be Buried

in

in Eternal Oblivion: But if ſhe refuſed, he had now got an Opportunity to ruin her.

The Pious Lady (whoſe fervent Devotions this Wretch had interrupted) Bridled, as much as Human Frailty could do, her Paſſion; Commanding him in mild Terms to be gone, and not wound her Chaſte Ears with his hated Diſcourſe: Againſt the Injury he threatned her, ſhe truſted in God for Protection, who is a ſtrong Tower, for the Safety of all thoſe that fly unto him; and ſhe doubted not, when ſhe had an Opportunity to make her Lord ſenſible of it, he would, through the Favour of Almighty God, concur with her, in her Opinion.

Antonio finding himſelf diſappointed in his main Expectation, and throughly nettled with his Anſwer, particularly the Concluſion of it, went away, Threatning and Muttering to himſelf: And in the Anti-chamber met *Fronovius*, who upon later Notice was haſtening to him, to whom he had told all that he had ſeen and heard. This made them conſult to take new Meaſures; and in Concluſion, reſolved her Chaſtity or Life ſhould be ſacrific'd to their Revenge. This was

no ſooner concluded on, but *Antonio* remember'd the Paper he had taken up, and taking it out of his Pocket, knew it to be the Gardener's Hand, and at firſt ſuppoſing it to be a Love-Letter that might diſcover the Intrigue between him and his Lady, was highly pleaſed; but he had ſcarce read it half over, e're he found ſuch weighty Arguments againſt the Church of *Rome*, Levelled ſo directly againſt her Tottering Foundation, as not only puzled his Underſtanding, but made him ſtorm at a ſtrange Rate: Whereupon *Fronovius* took it out of his Hand, and read the reſt, and in the Cloſe, theſe Words, viz. *Virtuous Lady, theſe Arguments*, Pro & Contra, *I ſubmit to your great Wiſdom, being very joyful in having, under God, been a poor Inſtrument in Enlightning your Underſtanding, to diſcern Truth from Falſhood.*

This left them no longer in doubt, who the Party was that (as they termed it) had Traduced her to Apoſtatize, and become Heretick, and for this conſequently to enjoy Favours ſhe denied to them; whereupon they Vowed a Bloody Revenge. But fearing that the Love *Alanſon* bore her, would not be effaced by

the

the Change of her Religion, especially when he should come to understand their Criminal Passion for her, and Practices against her, They resolved to make her Parents bear the Blame of that Stupendious Wickedness, which they themselves designed to be the Actors of: For they knew that her Parents were extraordinarily Bigotted to the *Romish* Church, and so where the likeliest to deal with in this Matter: Whereupon *Antonio* immediately posted to them, and desiring a private Conference with the Father and Mother; after many Hypocritical Shews of Sorrow for the Disgrace that would befal the Family, he declared how his Lady (since his Lord had been absent) had been perverted from the *Catholick* Religion by a *Hugenot*, a Heretick Gardener, a Fugitive Wretch, that had been taken in some Years ago upon Charity. He urged what Dishonour it would be to their Family, the Danger incurred by the King's Edicts; and lastly, the Loss of her Soul, if she was not timely recovered and brought to the right Fold, from whence she had perversly strayed. Then he began to magnifie the Pious Care and Pains he had taken to keep her in the

right

right Way, and to prevent her falling into such an unpardonable Sin; but that the Devil had been too hard for his Industry and Labours, through God's high Sufferance, to bring some great Judgment on her, for her Haughtiness and Contempt, *&c.*

This being delivered in a Tone very moving and Passionate, seeming altogether in Piety to *Deidamia*, made her Father Sigh, and the Old Lady burst out in Tears, wringing their Hands, and bewailing the Miseries of their Aged Years, in this (as they then termed it) worst of Misfortunes that could befal them; that the only Branch of their Family that should Convey it to Posterity, had made her self a Cast-a-way, for so in their Passionate Mood they express'd her to be. *Antonio* was glad to see them thus Wrought, and the Storm of their first Grief spending it self, and being allayed by falling Tears, they began to consult more Maturely how this Misfortune might be Reversed, and after many Things were Debated, *Antonio*'s Device of Lodging her in a Nunnery (where she might be Restrained from *Heretick* Books, as he said, and the Company of any Seducers,

ducers, and alſo be inſtructed by Virtuous Nuns, till her Lord came Home, and Determin'd what might farther be done in it) was approved.

What was to be done with the Gardener was the next Thing to be Conſulted, whether to make him away Secretly, or deliver him up to Juſtice; the Prieſt was for the Former, but the Parents Conſciences was tender in that, and could not conſent to ſuch a Wickedneſs; but *Antonio* Alledged, that the whole Buſineſs would be made Publick if he were delivered up to Juſtice, and their Daughter would be brought in as Criminal, and perhaps for her Obſtinacy her Lord might loſe his Honours, and Preferments at Court. This made them conſider farther, and at laſt left it to the wicked Prieſt, or thoſe he ſhould appoint, to do, as he or they pleaſed. They would have born him Company to *Alanſon*'s Houſe to ſee what their Perſuaſions might do, but he urged it would only be a Means to diſcovery the Matter; and that it would be the beſt for them to come and moderate Things when the Count came Home, of which he would give them the Firſt Notice, ſince at preſent

ſent what was to be done required Secrecy; that in the mean Time ſhe ſhould be provided for as became her Quality; and that ſuch a Place as he mentioned, with Time and Company, was the beſt Cure to joſtle thoſe wild Notions out of her Head: Upon which they only ſent her a Letter, and reſolved not to go themſelves. So *Antonio* returned well Satisfied to his wicked Companion.

Deidamia (who was Ignorant of this) miſſing her Paper, and not doubting which Way it went, taking more Care for *Bernard* in the Gardener than her ſelf, thought by it he would be diſcovered; wherefore ſhe ſent for him, gave him a Handful of Gold, and Commanded him to ſhift for himſelf; telling him what had paſſed, and the Danger he was in. This command he ſeemed exceeding loth to obey, and with Tears in his Eyes, proteſted, that for the Sake of his Religion, and in her Defence againſt any Injury or Violence, he was willing to expoſe his Life: But ſhe urged ſo many Things to haſten his Departure, that he promiſed to do it; and ſo they (with ſhedding many Tears (took a long Farewel of each other.

Ber-

Bernard was prepared to depart, as *Antonio* returned with his Orders; whereupon *Fronovius* clapped him up in a Dungeon, and that Night hired two Ruffians to carry him to the Sea-Clifts, and throw him thence Head-long; and thither they carried him in a Sack on a Horſe, Gagged and Bound; but finding a Veſſel thruſt into a Creek very near the Clifts, one of them enquired and found it belonging to a *French* Plantation in the *Weſt-Indies*; whereupon they took the Method of *Joſeph*'s Brethren with the *Iſhmaelites*, to make the beſt Purchaſe of him, rather than Deſtroy him and loſe it; ſo he that came to Enquire demanded of the Maſter, *If he wanted a luſty Servant?* He told him, *Yes*; then he returned, and took the Gardener out of the Sack, Ungagged and Unbounded him, and told him, That though he deſerved to Die for perverting his Lady to Hereſie, yet they had Compaſſion upon him, and would only ſend him to do Penance for a Slave in the *Weſt-Indies*, and bid him accept of it Thankfully, and without Muttering; and thereupon they delivered to the Maſter of the Veſſel, of whom they received Twelve Crowns. After which

which they returned, and gave an Account they had thrown him with a great Stone about his Neck from a fifty Foot Cliff into the Sea, and for it received the Reward Promiſed them. Nor was *Bernard* unwilling to go with his unknown Maſter; finding Providence had changed the Death that was deſigned him, only into Slavery, from whence he might Hope in Time to be releaſed. But his Care was greater for *Deidamia* than himſelf, for he had been uſed to Misfortunes, and inured to ſeveral Hardſhips. And her Grief was no leſs, that ſhe found her ſelf Conſtrained (as ſhe ſuppoſed for his Safety) ſo Abruptly to part with the Man that had been an Inſtrument in the filling her Heart ſo full of heavenly Conſolations; and had not laid her Commands on him to Write to her, or otherways give her ſecret Notice of his Abiding Place (that ſhe might have had farther Converſe with him, and been more Strengthened by him in the Profeſſion of that Truth he had inſtructed her in, and which ſhe was reſolved to abide by) till ſhe found Means to reſtore him to his Place again.

Whilſt

Whilſt ſhe was Penſive on theſe thoughts, *Antonio* having (as I before told you) gotten a Letter from her Parents to her, wherein they laid their Commands on her till her Lord's return, *as ſhe tendered the Favour of Almighty God, their Bleſſing, and her own Honour and Safety, to be Ruled and Guided in all Things by her Spiritual Paſtor.* (So, being ignorant of his Villany, they termed this wicked Prieſt.) *And whatever he perſuaded her to for the Good of her Soul, and Bodily Preſervation, readily to comply with it; to whoſe Care and Integrity, next to the Heavenly Protection, they heartily Recommended her till her Lord and Husband came Home:* This was Signed by both of them. And *Antonio* having conſulted *Fronovius* about it, they both came boldly to her Appartment, when they knew ſhe was in Private, and preſented it to her, *Charging her to obey it as ſhe tendered her Safety:* She no ſooner looked on it, but ſhe asked them ſo many Queſtions, that by *Antonio's* Replies, ſhe was not inſenſible, they had traduced her to her Parents; and after ſome juſt Reproaches, told them, *It ſhould not be long, before ſhe would go and Plead her own Cauſe, and doubted not ſo to juſtifie her Proceedings to her*

her Parents, that the black Villany of her baſe and treacherous Accuſers ſhould be unable to ſully the Brightneſs of her Innocence. The at firſt ſtarted them; but being reſolved to proceed in their wicked Deſigns, they plainly told her, *She was at their Diſpoſal, and that they had Orders to carry her to a Nunnery, where ſhe ſhould be Honourably Uſed, but debarred from the Deſtructive Principles, ſhe had lately Imbibed, till her and their Lord returned, to take the Matter into his own Hands, and determin'd how he pleas'd to Diſpoſe of her.*

This inſufferable Impudence of theſe Luſtful Wretches, ſtirred up her Zeal to ſo much holy An er and Deteſtation of what they propoſed, that ſhe in a great Paſſion proteſted to *Dye a thouſand Deaths, if it were Poſſible, aud by the more exquiſite Torments their Helliſh Malice could invent, rather than to be incloſed within the Walls of a* Nunnery, *which ſhe was ſatisfied was no other than a Sink of Sin, and plauſible Colour for Lewdneſs and Debauchery.* But they without Replying, offering to force from the Cloſet, ſhe oppoſed her Strength againſt their Rudeneſs, crying out for Help to the reſt of her Servant; but *Fronovius*, who was the Steward and Gover-

nour

nour of the Family, had ſo ordered the Matter, that thoſe, that immediately waited upon her, were then out of Hearing: So that without any other Interruption, than what her Contending gave them, they hurried her into a Cloſe Chamber in the remoteſt Part of the Houſe, where they Locked her in, and went to conſult farther, how they ſhould ſecretly conver her thence, whilſt ſhe (who expected after ſuch Treatment, nothing but a Violation of her Chaſtity, and would much rather have embraced Death, and counted it a Favour) was pouring out of her Soul to God, and imploring his Help in that needful Time of her Trouble, and begging of him to Strengthen her Faith, till on a ſudden, to allay the Troubles and Afflictions of her Mind, ſuch Beams of Joy and Comfort were Darted into her Soul, that ſhe aſſured her ſelf, *That that merciful God, whoſe gracious Protection ſhe had been ſeeking, would work out Deliverance for her in due Time.*

Theſe Conſpirators by this Time had come to a Reſult to rid themſelves (as they thought) for ever from the Fears they were in of their Villanous Practices being Diſcovered; which was this.

Fro-

Fronovius, *Counterfeited a Letter in* Alanſon's *Hand ſo very Exactly, that if himſelf had ſeen it, he might have been puzzled to diſtinguiſh it from his Own, and having got two Ruffians ready, one dreſſed in the Habit of an Officer, and the other like a Servant attending him;* Antonio *and his Companion in Wickedneſs went to her with it, and falling on their Knees, with ſome forced Tears, humbling imploring her Pardon for the Indignities they had offered to her, beſeeching her to be their good Lady, notwithſtanding their Follies, and they would never in the like Nature Offend, nor do any Thing to Diſoblige her; with many other proteſtations, and much feigned Sorrow for their Rudneſs and Deſigns upon her Chaſtity, imploring her not to Diſcover it to her Lord.*

Whilſt *Deidamia* was wondering, what that ſudden Alteration in thoſe, who had lately ſo Rudely treated her, might mean, *Fronovius* deliver'd her the Letter, in which ſhe read theſe Words;

My Dear *Deidamia*,

THo' I know, that the News which theſe Lines will acquaint you with, cannot be acceptable to you, yet Conjure you by our Mutual Affections, that you ſuffer not your-

ſelf

self to be disturbed, but hear what I shall tell you with that Patience and Serenity of Mind, which becomes you, as knowing it is your Duty in all Things that happen to us, to submit to the Divine Will. Know then, my Lovely Deidamia, *that in a late Encounter with a Party of the Enemies, I happened to be Wounded by a Chance-shot, which my Surgeons tell me is Mortal; and fearing that it may be so, and Desiring above all Things here below, to have a Sight of your Dear Self before I depart out of the World, I have sent the Bearer,* Monſ Durell, *one of my Captains, to conduct you to me forthwith: Who is a Person of that Worth and Honour, that you may trust your self with him without the Trouble of any Attendants but what he brings with him, because I would have you come as speedily as may be: Which is at Present all from him, who is both in Life and Death,*

Your ever Faithful Husband

Charlery, July 12. 1693.

D'ALANSON.

At the Reading of this ſhe Trembled, looked Pale, and ſhed abundance of Tears, being in the greateſt Diſorder and Confuſion Imaginable, intreating inſtantly to

ſee the Party that brought it, promiſing (on their renewing their intreaties) not to Diſcover their Wickedneſs, if by their Future Demeanour they made an Atonement for what had paſſed; and they thereupon ſolemnly promiſing it, led her down into the Hall, where the pretended Captain and his Servant bowed very low to her; and being before-hand Inſtructed, anſwered all her Queſtions ſo cunningly, that ſhe verily believed the Letter to come from her Lord, and that all he ſaid was true, deſiring them to refreſh themſelves, whilſt ſhe fitted her ſelf with other Apparel, and took ſome Jewels, Gold, *&c.* along with her; which done, and being about Four in the Evening, the Innocent Dove committed her ſelf into the Tallons of theſe bloody Vultures, mounting behind the ſuppoſed Captain, who had his Inſtructions not to let her ſee the next Morning Dawn. *Antonio* and *Fronovius* pretended much Sorrow at her Departure, but inwardly rejoyced, that by this Stratagem they ſhould get her eaſily into the Trap without Noiſe or Diſturbance; which had they gone about to do by Force, her Cries might have brought Reſcue, and prevented their Villanous

Purpoſe

Purpoſe: The curſed Prieſt indeed would have firſt had her Raviſhed by himſelf and his Companion, and then Murthered at Home, but the other conſidering, that it would be Difficult to Diſpoſe of the Dead Body, contrived this Way. But I muſt leave them for ſome Time, hugging themſelves in their Security, and follow the deceived Innocent.

The bloody Cut-throats having got the Prize, by her too much Credulity, into their Poſſeſſion, took all the By-ways they could, croſſing the Country and holding her in Diſcourſe with many Things relating to the War; and ſo ſpun out the Time till the Sun was near ſetting, when coming into a Valley between two vaſt Woods, in a Place much Unfrequented, they Rode into one of them, at a Turning of a narrow Way, where the ſuppoſed Captain ſtopped, and the Ruffian that Rode ſingle alighted, and ſurprizingly pulled *Deidamia* from behind him, who at ſo unexpected a Rudeneſs Trembled, and began to ſuſpect the Treachery; nor was the other ſlow in Diſmounting, when both together they carried her into the Wood; upon this, with piteous Shrieks and Cies, ſhe demanded *the Cauſe of ſuch*

Violence; but without Replying, the Villain who had carried her, drawing his Sword, Directed it for the fatal Thruſt, deſigning inſtantly to pierce he Heart; whilſt on her *Knees ſhe was imploring their Pity and Compaſſion, and intreating to know in what ſhe had Offended, to make them ſo void of Humanity towards a diſtreſſed Lady, whom they had betrayed into that Solitary Place, being Convinced that her Lord had given no ſuch Commands: No,* (replyed they) *that's true, nor do we know him; but* Antonio *and* Fronovius *have, and we muſt Obey them; beſides, you are an* Heretick, *and ought not to Live.*

Deidamia now finding ſhe was betrayed by her Wicked Servants into the Hands of theſe mercileſs Villains; and ſeeing nothing but preſent Death before her Eyes, ſhe poured out her Soul to God in Vehement Petitions for her Favour from his Hands, and that if he ſaw fit ſhe ſhould Live no longer here, that he would receive her into Life Eternal, and that rather (if it were required) ſhe might Seal her Profeſſion of the Reformed Religion, in which ſhe had found ſo much heavenly Conſolation, with her deareſt Blood, than be prevail'd with to Recant it. *But*

thou

thou, O Lord, (said she) *who deliveredst* Daniel *from the Fury of the Lions, and the Three Children from devouring Flames, canst, if thou wilt, in this great Extremity, deliver me from these Blood-thirsty Men, whom I have no manner Injured: But be it as thou pleasest, so that my departing Soul, when it leaves this Mortal Body, may find shelter in the Arms of thy Mercy.* The Villains, who all this while had eyed her, and saw her Lovely in her Tears, troubled not themselves about her Religion, for their Business was to Murder her; and therefore the pretended Captain said, *Lady! our Time is short, this Instant you must Die, therefore settle your Mind for the fatal Stroke:* To this she made no Reply, but continuing on her Knees, with Eyes up-lifted to Heaven, Sighs and Tears being the Language of her Soul, his impious Hand was about to give the fatal Thrust; but the other catched hold of his Arm, and stopt his Sword; and after that, they Whispered; but she knew not what they said, till their farther Attempt revealed it.

They had no sooner done conferring Notes, but they Violently forced her on her Back, and prepared to Ravish her,

firſt, and then put her to Death: Her Cries upon this were redoubled, and ſhe begged Death rather than the Loſs of her Chaſtity, opening her Boſom, and tempting their Swords to pierce it. But her Beauty in this ſorrowful Condition, was ſo Charming in their Luſtful Eyes, that they were inexorable to her Cries and Prayers. O had *Alanſon* been but there, with what Vengeance at this piteous Sight would his Sword have been drawn to their Deſtruction, and her Reſcue! But he being Ignorant of the Wounds his dear Lady was about to receive, Heaven interpoſed for her Reſcue: For the Villains fell at Diſcord, who ſhould firſt enjoy her; and the Conteſt grew ſo hot, that they diſputed it with their Swords, and in the Duel the pretended Captain (moſt forward in the Miſchief) was ran through the Body, and with a ghaſtly Groan yielded up his wicked Soul into the Hands of Death. The other being ſorely wounded, and Fainting through loſs of Blood, gave *Deidamia* Time to fly farther into the Woods, wandering ſo far that Night covering every Thing with Darkneſs, ſhe thought ſhe might now reſt a little to recover Breath; and

ſo

ſo ſat down upon the Ground: Tho' the Dangers ſhe had ſo lately eſcaped from wicked Men, and thoſe that ſhe now feared from wild Beaſts, would not a long Time ſuffer her to cloſe her Eyes; however ſhe ceaſed not with earneſt Prayer an Supplication to recommend her ſelf to God, and implore his Aid and Protection; who by the late wonderful Deliverance he had given her, had ſufficiently ſhown her how able he is to ſave to the utmoſt, even in the midſt of the greateſt Dangers. The conſideration whereof, was a mighty allay to her preſent Sorrows in the Midſt of that Forlorn Condition, to which ſhe was reduced; ſo that a little ſupported thereby, ſhe fell at laſt into a ſound Sleep, having no other Pillow but a Turff of Graſs, nor Covering than the Canopy of Heaven. The Morning being come, *Deidamia* again returned Thanks to God, both for her late Deliverance, and her laſt Nights Preſervation; earneſtly begging of him, That as he had Graciouſly begun to Deliver her, ſo that he would in his own good Time compleat it, to his own Glory and her Good; and, that tho' at preſent her Afflictions are not Joyous but Grie-

vous, yet, that through God's over-ruling Providence, they might afterwards bring forth for her the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness; Humbly desiring, she might be kept from entertaining hard Thoughts of God, or of his Truth and Ways, which she had so lately embraced, notwithstanding any Sufferings she had or might meet withal upon that Account. And having thus Recommended herself to God, she resolved, if it were possible, to get out of that Desolate, Pathless, and Solitary Place: But the more she thought to Extricate her self, the more she found her self Entangled, and without Hopes of getting out. The Fruits, that at that Time of the Year grew upon the Trees, supply'd her with Food; and the little purling Streams that issued from some Springs in the Wood, supply'd her with Drink: So that finding it impossible to get away, she was Content to tarry there, till the Providence of God should find out some way of Deliverance for her; being satisfied in this, That the Comforts of Conversation, and other Conveniences that she us'd to have, were abundantly made up in the Communion she enjoy'd with God, whose blessed Presence

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(as she has since Confess'd) did more than Recompense for all her outward Wants.— In the Profession of which Happiness we will leave her for a Time, and look back to see what became of the Surviving Ruffian.

His Companion (as we have already heard) was killed in their Contest, about which should Enjoy (or rather Ravish) *Deidamia* first, and he that Survived, fainted away through loss of Blood, which (as we have already releated) made way for *Deidamia*'s Escape: But he recovering in some little Time, found Means to stop its Effusion; and then missing of *Deidamia*, he made what Search he could for her, not so much to satisfie his Lust, (which his loss of Blood had pretty much allayed) as to take away her Life, that in Time to come she might not be an Evidence of his Wickedness; but not finding her after all his Search, he Buried his Companion, and returned to those that had set them to Work, telling them, *That* Deidamia, *when she found she must Die by a Surprize, had snatch'd away his Companions Sword, and Slain him with it by and unlook'd for Thrust: But that himself had quickly reveng'd it by her own Death, and had buried*

them both in a deep Pit to avoid Diſcovery. This they believed, and gave him what they had promiſed; being mightily pleaſed that now they were (as they thought at leaſt) out of all Danger.

Whilſt theſe Things were thus Acted, *Deidamia*'s Parents became exceedingly Troubled, even to that Degree, that their Sleep departed from them; and thoſe little Slumbers, that they ſometimes got, were interrupted with ſtrange and unaccountable Dreams, which was alſo attended with an unuſual Melancholy, of which they could give no Account. This made them reſolve to enquire after *Deidamia*, of whom they heard nothing, ſince the Permiſſion they gave to *Antonio* to carry her to a Nunnery.

But *Fronovius* and *Antonio* had been ſo Cunning to prevent their Diſcovery of the Villany, that for a Sum of Money they engaged a certain Abbeſs of *Antonio*'s Acquaintance, to acknowledge (when there ſhould be Occaſion) that *Deidamia* had been brought thither, but that ſhe had made her Eſcape from thence, ſo that ſhe knew not what was become of her, nor could give any Account of the Reaſon of it, but only by a Note that ſhe had

had left beehind her in her Chamber, which Note *Fronovius* (who, as we have already ſaid had a Notably Faculty at Counterfeiting of Hands) had Writ in a Hand ſo like *Deidamia*'s, that it could not be diſtinguiſhed. They had alſo given the Abbeſs a Ladder of Ropes, by which it was Pretended, ſhe had made her eſcape. *Fronovius* and *Antonio* having ſo well laid their Deſign with the Abbeſs, kept Poſſeſſion of *Alanſon*'s Houſe without Fear or Controul. And therefore when *Deidamia*'s Parents came thither to enquire after their Daughter, they received them with much ſeeming Courteſie and Kindneſs, and *Fronovius* told them, *That tho' it had Unhappily fallen out, that their Lady had been Perverted to Hereſie ſince the Departure of the* Count *her Husband, yet he had taken that Care of the Family in his Lord's Abſence, which was conſiſtent with his Duty; and that as to his Lady, the Orders they had been pleas'd to give to* Antonio *to ſend her to a* Nunnery *had been punctually obſerv'd; and he hoped by that Means, againſt the coming Home of their Lord, ſhe might be again reconciled unto her Mother-Church, out of which there is no Salvation.* Tho' this Diſcourſe of *Fronovius* was very Plauſible, yet the Parents

Parents of *Deidamia* were not at all satisfied with it, but desired to see and discourse with her in the *Nunnery* where she was, which *Fronovius* seemed ready to assent to, and with *Antonio* offered their Service to accompany them thither, telling them, they had given so strict a Charge to the Abbess, to prevent any *Hereticks* from coming to her, that none might be admitted to speak with her, but themselves, or by their immediate Order.

The Parents being for the present satisfied with this Answer, lay there that Night, big with the Hopes they had of seeing their Daughter the next Day: Which being come, they went with *Antonio* and *Fronovius*, to the *Nunnery*, but were extreamly Surprized, when they came thither, to hear the Abbess say, That the young Lady had been too hard for her, and notwithstanding all her Care and Diligence, had found a Way to make her Escape but the Day before, and then led them into the Garden, shewing them the Ladder of Ropes by which she got over the Wall; and then having them into a Room which she called her Chamber, gave them the Note which *Fronovius* left with her, asking her Parents if they knew that Hand;

Hand; they haſtily opened it, and thought verily it had been of *Deidamia*'s Writing: And then Reading it, found it to Contain theſe Words.

HAving been forced to this Place againſt my Mind and Conſcience, let none be troubled, that I have found a Means to ſet my ſelf at Liberty: And am gone to him, who no doubt will Right me of the Injury done me by my Treacherous Servants.

Deidamia.

Her Parents upon reading this Letter and believing it to be True, burſt forth into Tears for the Loſs of their Daughter; not knowing now in what Part of the Country to ſeek for her: The only Hopes they had was, that ſhe was gone into *Flanders* to her Huſband, to which Opinion *Fronovius* and *Antonio* both perſwaded them, from that Expreſſion in the Note, [*I am gone to him, that will Right my Injuries.*] Upon which, giving *Fronovius* a Charge to be a Faithful Steward in his Lord's Abſence, they returned to their own Houſe, where they Writ the following Letter to the *Count*, and ſent it by an Expreſs to *Flanders*.

To

To the Count D'Alanſon, *Coll. of the Regiment of* Picardy.

Deareſt SON,

IT *is not without Unexpreſſible Grief that we Write theſe Lines, which brings you the ſad Tydings of the greateſt Affliction that ever befell you; and which, without the Divine Aid, you will find it very hard to bear; but I hope Heaven will ſupport you under it; it is in brief, the loſs of* Deidamia; *I do not mean by Death, for had Heaven ordain'd it ſo, that would have been far more Eligible: But, alas! She is loſt both to her ſelf and all of us; She is (ſince your Departure) perverted to* Hereſie, *and turned an obſtinate* Hugenot; *which whilſt we endeavoured to Reclaim her from, by conſenting upon the Advice of your* Chaplain, *Father* Antonio) *that ſhe ſhould be put into an* Nunnery, *ſhe is eſcaped from thence no one knows whither; the Thoughts thereof has filled the Hearts of my ſelf and Wife with ſuch Unexpreſſible Grief and Sorrow, as has render'd us altogether Unconſolable our only remaining Hope is, that ſhe may be gone to you; and that if you have not already, you may yet hear of her in a few Days; for ſhe left behind*

hind her in her Chamber, at the Nunnery *of St.* Bridget's *(whither* Fronovius *and* Antonio *conducted her) the following Note.*

HAving been forced to this Place against my Mind and Conſcience, let none be troubled that I found a Means to ſet my ſelf at Liberty: And am gone to him who no doubt will Right me of the Injury done me by my Treacherous Servants,

Deidamia.

It is this Note alone that gives us ground to hope that you may ſee her again; and I Pray God it may fall out accordingly. And whenever this loſt Sheep ſhall be found again, I doubt not but you will lay her in your Boſom, according to the Example of our great Shepherd, and by your wonted Love and Tenderneſs towards her, endeavour to reſtore her again to the true Fold and Church of Chriſt, to whoſe holy Protection I commit you, and ſo Farewel.

J. MONTAIGN.

The Count *Alanſon* was ſo tranſported with Grief at the Reading of this Letter, that for ſome Time he remain'd Speechleſs:

His

His Trouble was too great to Vent it self in Words; ſtill Waters being always the Deepeſt: But ſoon after his Sorrow gave it ſelf Vent in the moſt paſſionate and feeling Complaints: And then calling for a Pen and Ink, he Writ the following Letter to his Father.

Alanſon, to Sieur *Montaign.*

SIR,

I Received your Letter, the Contents whereof has brought that Grief and Sorrow to my Heart, that will continue there for ever, unleſs the Sight of my deareſt Deidamia *removes it: Her being turned* Hugenot *is not that which gives me much Trouble, it rather makes me think there is ſomething of Good in thoſe Opinions, or elſe ſo much Goodneſs and Virtue, as that of* Deidamia's, *could never have embraced them. Had you but let her alone in my Houſe I had been Happy ſtill; but your endeavouring to reclaim her has been the Ruin of us both: I am ſo Tranſported with Grief and Anger, that I know not what to Write, nor would I Write at all, but come away immediately, were it not for the Hopes you give from the Note found in the Chamber of my deareſt* Deidamia, *that ſhe was gone to him that would ſoon* Right her Injuries, *and*

that

that can be none but my ſelf: And might I but recover her again, ſhe ſhould not be miſtaken in her Thoughts. 'Tis in Hopes of her coming that I am content to ſtay here a little longer: For 'tis Deidamia *alone can make me Happy. Farewell.* ALANSON.

The Meſſenger being returned with *Alanſon*'s Letter, it adminiſtred freſh Grief to *Deidamia*'s Parents. For they thereby found, that by their too eaſily yielding to *Antonio*'s Deſigns, they had not only loſt their Daughter, but the Affections of their Son-in-Law. In this State we will not leave them, and make *Deidamia* a Viſit in her ſorrowing Solitude.

Deidamia being in that lonely Place, each Day removed her Habitation, until at laſt ſhe found a Cave to ſecure her ſelf from the Injuries of the Weather, and was a quiet Reſting-place to her in the Night-ſeaſon, for by ſhutting up the Mouth of the Cave, ſhe covered her ſelf from all Danger; which ſhe look'd upon, and thanked God for, as a great Mercy: And living upon the Fruits that grew in the Wood, (as I ſaid before) ſhe ſpent her Time wholly in Prayer and Meditation;

tion; and tho' her Diet and Lodging was extreamly changed, yet her Health was both continued and increased, and she found that Promise made good to her, *As thy Day is, so shall thy Strength be.*

She had now lived almost four Months in this Solitude, and the Winter approaching, began to make the Woods uncomfortable; and the Cold extreamly nipping: So that *Deidamia* was forced often to walk apace to get her heat. One Day as she had walked farther than Ordinary, she discovered some Kind of an Obsure Path she had not seen before, and tho' she knew not whither it would lead her, she was resolved to follow the Track: She travelled so far that Day, that it was in Vain for her to think of retreating to her beloved Cave, where she had lain so many Nights; and therefore making the best Shift that she could, she sate down upon the Ground, and Recommending her self to the Almighty's Protection, composed her self to Rest; the next Morning she arose as soon as it was Light, and travelling forward, perceived her Path to be like that of the *Just*, which the wise Man tells us, *Shines more and more unto the perfect Day:* And she was en-

encouraged to go on, becauſe ſhe fancied ſhe heard the Barking of Dogs; and after travelling a little farther, ſhe was well aſſured it was a real Thing, and not a Fancy only; and therefore ſhe purſued her Journey the more eagerly. The Sun had not come to its Meridian, when ſhe heard an unuſual Ruſhing amongſt the Buſhes, and ſtanding ſtill to know what it might mean, ſhe perceived a Grave Old Man with two Dogs following him, come from among the Trees. They were both alike Surpriz'd at the Enterview; for the Old Man having never ſeen any Human Creature in that Place before, could not but be amazed to ſee a Woman coming from the midſt of the Wood; and therefore addreſſing himſelf to her, he enquired by what Misfortune ſhe came thither? Intreating her not to be afraid, for ſhe ſhould receive no Harm from him: *Deidamia* upon this looking Earneſtly upon him, and perceiving his Carriage and Demeanour to be what became the Gravity of his Years, ſhe told him, *She was indeed in a wild Place, and knew not the Way out again.* To this the Old Man reply'd, *If ſhe would go with him to his homely Cottage, his Wife would Conduct her out of the*

the Wood. *Deidamia* presently accepted of his Kindness and went with him. And after they had gone about the Space of a Mile, they came to his House; where the good Old Woman (who was somewhat surprized to see her Husband bring a Stranger along with him) rose up, and received her very Courteously, desiring her to sit down, and refresh herself with such homely Fare as their Cottage afforded: Which she did, and then asking her farther how she came into that Place. *Deidamia* desired *they would ask her no Questions for the Repetition of her Sorrow would but renew her Grief; only thus much she would let them know, that her being there Alive was the Effects of God's Providence in delivering her from Wicked and Blood-thirsty Men that sought to take away her Life.* Upon which, perceiving her to be full of Grief, they asked her no more Questions, but finding her very Weary, they led her into a homely but clean Appartment, to repose her self upon the Bed: *Deidamia* was mighty thoughtful what this Aged Couple might be; and whether or no for her Apparel's sake, and that Gold, and those Jewels she had about her, she might not fall into great a Danger as

that

that ſhe had formerly eſcap'd, and tho' ſhe was at firſt glad of their Company, ſhe could have wiſhed her ſelf in her beloved Cave again. But her Fears were quickly over, when by a *French* Bible and other good Books, ſhe found in her Room, and by the hearty Prayers of the good Old Man at Night, ſhe perceived they were *Hugenots*, who had fled into that ſolitary Retirement for the ſake of their Religion: This made her be much more free with them, bleſſing God for his Providence in bringing her thither, and reſolving to continue there, till ſhe could meet with an Opportunity to return Home into the Arms of her Deareſt *Alanſon:* And the Old Couple having underſtood her Hiſtory more fully, by their Pity and Commiſeration, made her Abode with them more eaſie. And the Communion ſhe had with them in the Things of another World, weaned her from this in a great Meaſure. So that here ſhe took up her Abode, and continued with them, not only that Winter, but the Year following, until ſhe was found out by her beloved *Alanſon*, to whom it is Time that we now Return.

The

The Count *Alanſon* having tarried at the Camp a whole Month after the receiving of his Father-in-Law's Letter, in expectation of ſeeing his deareſt *Deidamia*; began now to be impatient of tarrying any longer; and indeed, during all that Time, he was ſo much changed in his Carriage, Humours, and Converſation, that all thoſe with whom he us'd to Converſe in the Camp, took Notice of it, he having abandon'd himſelf to an extream Melancholy; therefore deſiring of the King to go Home, both for the Recovery of his Health, and for the ſettling ſome Affairs in his Family, he ſoon obtained it, and ſoon after (tho' with a heavy Heart) arrived there. Where his firſt Buſineſs was to enquire after *Deidamia*, but none of the Servants could give any Account of her but *Frononius* and *Antonio*, who gave him the ſame Account that had been ſent him by his Father-in-Law: To which he Sternly asked them, *How they durſt diſpoſe of their Lady and Miſtreſs, contrary to her Will, without his Conſent or Knowledge?* Telling them, *He feared by the Note ſhe had written, it was their Treachery that was the Occaſion of her Loſs; which if he could but be Confirmed in, he would take*

take Care they ſhould receive a Puniſhment ſuitable to the greatneſs of their Crimes. At which *Fronovius* and *Antonio* began to Tremble, and make the beſt Excuſes for themſelves they could; alledging the Conſent of her Parents for what they did. But that did not at all ſatisfie *Alanſon*, who ſoon diſcharged them from his Service, and reſolved to Travel in Search for *Deidamia*, tho' he knew not which Way to bend his Courſe: But after many a tedious Journey, enquiring amongſt thoſe who were Favourers of the *Hugenots*, he yet could hear no Tydings of her. So that full of Grief and Sorrow, he led a retir'd and Melancholy Life in his own Houſe, abſenting himſelf from all Company, and Mourning like a *Turtle* that had loſt his Mate, tho' his Friends by all Means poſſible endeavoured to Comfort him; perſuading him to ſurceaſe his Grief; for that it was probable *Deidamia* by ſome Misfortune or other was Dead; and therefore they advis'd him to think of a Second *Marriage*, as that which would reſtore his former Gayety, and make him forget *Deidamia*. But the more they endeavoured to perſuade him, the more he was reſolved to the Contrary; and there-

therefore to avoid their continued Importunities, he fixt his Resolution once more to Travel in Quest of her; which accordingly he did, but without Success: And therefore he resolved to return again to his own House, and there spend the remainder of his Days in Solitude.

But as he was returning Home, in his Way, he met with a Vast Concourse of People, and Demanding the Occasion of it, he was told a Criminal was going to be broken on the Wheel, for a Murder he had Committed; upon which, Curiosity led him to see the Execution. And getting pretty near, the Malefactor cast his Eyes upon him, and straight knew him to be *Alanson* the Husband of *Deidamia*; and being smitten with Remorse of Conscience, he beckoned *Alanson* to come near, and humbly begged his Pardon for the Wrong he had done him. At this *Alanson* both Started and fell a Trembling, fearing it was for her Murder the Criminal was to Die: But coming nearer, the Malefactor asked him, *If he had heard any News of his Lady?* And then with Tears Confessed, *That himself and another had been hired to Murder her, to which End they carried her into a Wood,* (which he named

to

to him) *but by a Miraculous Providence she escaped out of their Hands; that afterwards he had reported to those that set him to Work, that he had actually Murthered her; for which he received the Reward; but which way she escaped, he knew not; and that this was about two Years since.* The *Count* urged him to tell the Names of those that had so hired him; but he said, *He had sworn upon the holy Sacrament of the Altar never to discloſe 'em; and that he feared Damnation if he should: Only* (said he) *this I may say, without breaking my Oath, They were two Persons in whom you have put a great deal of Confidence.* And then solemnly attested, *That what he had said was the Truth.* And soon after was Executed.

This Dying Criminal's Confession confirm'd *Alanson*, that *Deidamia* had been Treacherously carried thither, either from his House or the Nunnery; and he no longer doubted that *Fronovius* and *Antonio* were the Persons that had hired Villains to Murther her; and therefore though they were moved from his Service some time ago, yet he was resolved to pursue them, in order to bring them to Justice: But first he intended to make a fresh search after *Deidamia*, the Crimi-

nal having given him an Account where ſhe eſcaped from them; and therefore he thought (if ſhe were ſtill alive) ſhe might be ſomewhere in the Vicinity of that Wood: Towards that therefore he bended his Courſe, and being arrived in Sight thereof, and ſeeing how vaſt a Thing it was, he perceived it would be a difficult Thing to find her, even though ſhe was there. Yet at his entering in he conceived ſome Hopes in his Mind, that he ſhould not loſe his Labour. Whereupon alighting, and giving his Horſe to his Servant, (who had attended him in all his Melancholy Travels) and charged him to attend there till he came back, he went into the Wood alone, and found himſelf entangled amongſt Thickets, Briars and Buſhes; yet ſtill he went on, ſearching every Cave and Solitary Place, often calling out, *Deidamia!* till Darkneſs coming on, made him think of Returning to his Man; but he found he was gone to far too Retreat back in Time, and therefore reſolved to go forward: And being, no doubt, guided by Providence, he happened upon that Cave where *Deidamia* had ſo often bewailed his Abſence, and mourned her own Solitary State; and there

there he rested his weary and tired Body, for that Night, resolving to pursue his Search the next Morning; which being come, just as he was going out of the Cave, he perceived something sparkle very brightly on the Ground, which he stooped and took up; and looking on it in the open Light, he found it to be a Locket of *Diamonds*, which he had formerly given *Deidamia*; and she unwittingly had dropt there. The finding of this, filled him with some Transports of Joy, as looking upon it as an earnest of his good Success in finding the Owner: Thereupon he often repeated her Name very loud, but could receive no Answer but by some broken Eccho's. And therefore going on, he knew not whither, but being directed by the same Providence that had before conducted him to the Cave, when he had wandered so far, that he was almost hopeless, he was suddenly set upon by two Whiffling Curs, which, upon offering to draw his Sword, ran away Barking from him; which he pursuing came in a little Time to a Path, where he might discern the Foot-steps of Human Creatures, which very much revived his Hopes, and encouraged him

ſtill to go on; he had not gone far before he diſcerned Smoke to iſſue from a ſmall Cottage; to which, as he approached pretty near, he was again ſaluted by the furious Barking of thoſe Dogs whom he had before purſued. This was the Cottage where *Deidamia* reſided, who upon the Barking of the Dogs, looking out to ſee what was the Matter, eſpied *Alanſon* coming towards her, and (the Idea of his Image being continually in her Breaſt) ſhe no ſooner ſaw, but knew him, and running into his Arms in an Exceſs of Joy, was only able to Cry out, *Ah! my Dear Lord*, Alanſon! But exceſs of Joy proves ſometimes Fatal, and it had like to have done ſo to *Deidamia*, for ſhe immediately ſwooned away in his Arms: The Dogs ſtill continued their Barking which alſo cauſed the good Old Woman of the Cottage to ſee what the Cauſe was, and was extreamly ſurprized to ſee a genteele Stranger there, and *Deidamia* fainting in his Arms; however, ſhe made what haſt ſhe could to endeavour her Recovery, deſiring *Alanſon* to bring her into the Houſe, which he immediately did, telling the good Woman that he was *Deidamia*'s Husband; which ſhe (being very well

well acquainted with *Deidamia*'s Story) was very glad to hear. It was a considerable Time before *Deidamia* could be brought to her self, which so much afflicted the *Count*, that he was almost ready to faint away himself. But his Lady being again recovered, *Alanson* with a Thousand Kisses and endearing Expressions, assured her of the Truth, Reality, and Constancy of his Affections towards her; whilst she on the other Hand, seemed to be the most satisfied Creature in the World, in that she had once more seen her dearest Lord *Alanson*; desiring him not to be troubled at her fainting away, since it was only occasioned by the Excess of that Joy she conceived in seeing him again; and that Death it self would have been easie to her upon so happy an Occasion, and especially Dying in his Arms.

Whilst in this Manner they were expressing the Ardency of their Affections to each other, the good Man of the House came Home; and being told by his Wife that *Deidamia*'s Husband was there, he was over-joyed; and courteously saluted *Alanson*, telling him, *He was sure he was a Welcome Man there to them all*, but especially to *Deidamia*, who had long

mourned his Abſence. *Alanſon* kindly thanked him, and told him, *He ſhould ever Honour him as the Refuge, and Preſerver of his dear Lady.* And after ſuch Civilities on each Side paſſed, the good Woman ſet before him ſuch homely Refreſhment as ſhe had prepared on the Table: *Alanſon* eat but little, *Deidamia*'s Preſence being more to him than all the Dainties in the World; yet perceiving with what Courſe Fare his Lady had been there contented, he praiſed her Humility, and wondered at her Virtue. Dinner being ended, *Alanſon*, was concerned for his Servant, whom he had left in the Entrance of the Wood, and would have gone back to him; but the good Old Man would by no Means let him, telling him he would go himſelf, becauſe he better knew the Way, and could eaſier find it; and ſo taking his Dogs along with him, he went accordingly: The Man having waited at the Entrance of the Wood, from the Time that his Maſter went into it, till the next Morning, and hearing nothing of him, leaving his Horſes in the Fields adjoyning to the Wood, reſolved to find him out, and having got a good a Way, he met the Old Gentleman,

who

who was coming to him; and enquiring of him for his Master, whom he describ'd, he told him he had both seen and came from him, to conduct him where he was, and that he had found his Lady; at this the Servant was very glad, and Joyfully went along with him. After the Old Gentleman was gone for the Servant, the Count and his Lady went into the Woods, and there she gave him a particular Account of all her Sorrows and Sufferings since his departing from her. And the Reason of her staying where she was; viz. *The Old Gentlemen not daring to go out of the Wood with her, he being a proscrib'd Person; and to go without him was to endanger her own Life: Besides, she knew not how* Antonio *might have ordered Matters, having the Pretence of Heresie to lay to her Charge; and that hearing nothing of him in all this Time, she thought his Affections might have been Estranged from her.* But *Alanson* assur'd her to the contrary; telling her, *He could not but wonder at the unparallel'd Villany of* Fronovius *and* Antonio; *and that he had turned them out of his Service soon after he came home from the Camp.* After which the Old Gentleman and *Alanson*'s Servant, being (as before related)

related) arrived at the Cottage, the Evening was far ſpent, and ſo they all betook themſelves to reſt.

The next Morning *Alanſon* was preparing for his Return home; but before they went, their aged Landlord would needs have them ſtay and Dine, and in diſcourſe told him, He was once a Tenant of his Fathers; but by cruel Edicts was forced not only to leave that Farm, but his Paternal Inheritance, ſuffering the Spoils and Loſs of all for the ſake of Chriſt and a good Conſcience; and in this Solitary Retirement have enjoyed more true Peace and Satisfaction, than in all the Pleaſure of his Forepaſt Life. The *Count* then asked him his Name, which he told him was *De La Mont*; upon which he preſently knew and Embraced him, ſaying, *That tho' himſelf was of the* Roman *Perſuaſion*, yet he had often pitied his Sufferings, adding, *That it was given out he Died in Priſon.* The Pious *Deidamia*, from the Diſcourſe took an occaſion to ſay, *Ah! my deareſt Lord, you ſee what a Cruel and Mercileſs Religion it is that you Profeſs, and which through the Goodneſs of God, I have lately departed from. I am not Surpriz'd* (ſaid *Alanſon*) *at that which you*

you ſay, for I was inform'd in Flanders *that you had changed your Religion. I wiſh to God,* (replied *Deidamia*) *that your ſelf, my deareſt Lord, was likewiſe made a partaker of the ſame happy Change.* Upon this Monſ. *De La Mont* put in, and laid down ſuch weighty Reaſons for the Truth of the Reformed Religion, and againſt the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, that it encouraged *Deidamia* farther to go on, and ſhew the Viciouſneſs and Debauchery of the *Romiſh* Clergy, their Bloody Principles and Perſecuting Spirit, ſo that *Alanſon* was forced to Confeſs, that what was alledged againſt their Practices was true, but as to their Principles (abating that of Perſecution) he believed they might be miſtaken: Upon which *Deidamia* replied, *I am glad, my dear Lord, to find you are againſt Perſecution; I hope then you will be willing I ſhall enjoy the Liberty of my Conſcience (the only Happineſs I have had in this Solitary Retirement) and that you will never go about to Compel me to go to Maſs, which I will rather chuſe to die than do:* To this *Alanſon* reply'd, *That he was no ſuch Bigot as to think that thoſe that ſincerely Worſhipped God, according to the beſt of their Underſtandings, (as he was confident*

Deidamia *did) might not be accepted of him, though of an Opinion different from himself: And as to Compel her to go to Mass, if by Arguments he could not Persuade her to it, he solemnly promised he never would use any other Means.*

And being now ready to depart, *Alanson* offered *La Mont* store of Gold for their Kindness to his Lady while she had been with them, which he absolutely refused, saying, *Her Conversation had been so agreeable, that they were the Persons who had been obliged.* So that leave being taken, and *La Mont* Praying that God would go along with them, and make their Way Prosperous, they parted, and coming out of the Wood, the Servant readily found the Horses; and *Deidamia* getting up behind her Lord, they made the best of their Way towards *Alanson*'s House; where they were received with the rejoycing of their Acquaintance, and much more of her Parents, to whom in a Day or two they made a Visit, *Deidamia* being received by them as one risen from the Dead. And the Story of their Daughter's Troubles being all related to them, they could not but admire the Providence of God, in preserving her,

and

and wonder at the monſtrous Wickedneſs of *Fronovious* and *Antonio:* Who upon their hearing of the Confeſſion of the Dying Criminal, had withdrawn themſelves from their former Reſidences. And *Antonio* (the Better to eſcape deſerved Puniſhment for his Luſtful Attempts upon *Deidamia*'s Chaſtity) went privately to the Biſhop of *Rheims*, and told him that Count *Alanſon*'s Lady was depraved with *Hereſie*, in which ſhe was ſo much Countenanced by her Lord, that himſelf for endeavouring to reclaim her, was turned out of the Family, and cut off from all Intereſt in it, and therefore came humbly to beg his Protection againſt ſo powerful an Adverſary, ſince what he had done was only out of Zeal to promote the *Catholick Religion*. The Biſhop received him into his Protection, and Writ a ſharp Letter to the Count about it. Who having received it, believed it was done by the Inſtigation of *Antonio*, whom he heard he had entertained, and being troubled that ſo great a Villain ſhould find any Countenance from the Biſhop, he Writ back again to know the Names of thoſe that had ſo Injuriouſly informed him againſt his Lady: But the Biſhop

would

would not gratifie him ſo far in his Deſires. This made the *Count* return him a ſecond Letter, written in a more Angry Stile, declaring, *That if he could not have Juſtice from him, the King himſelf ſhould be acquainted with it, and by him he would ſeek Redreſs.* This ſo Nettled the Biſhop, that he ſent Examiners to his Lady, to interrogate her about her Religion; of which the *Count* having ſome Intimation, ſent her to her Parents, who were extreamly troubled at theſe freſh Misfortunes, and mightily Scandalized at the Villany of *Antonio*, and the Biſhop's protecting him from Juſtice, grew thereupon very cold in the Profeſſion of the *Popiſh* Religion, which ſo furiouſly perſecuted Innocence and Virtue, and countenanced the greateſt Wickedneſs: This the pious *Deidamia* Wiſely improved, and ſo effectually wrought with them, by her Warm and Zealous Diſcourſes, that through the Operation of God's Holy Spirit aſſiſting her, they were both brought over to the Embracing of the Truth.

The Biſhop's Examiners being diſappointed, returned back without their Errand; upon which the Biſhop threatned to Excommunicate both *Alanſon* and his Family;

Family; and was ſoon after as good as his Word. Upon this *Alanſon* Poſts away to the King, who was then at *Marly*, where complained of the Injury done him by the Biſhop of *Rheims*, both in Excommunicating him, and Protecting a Villanous Criminal from Juſtice. But it ſeems the Biſhop had been before-hand with him, and made his Complaint firſt: For the King receiv'd him very Coldly, and told him, *The Biſhop of* Rheims *was a good Man, and he left his Buſineſs wholly to him.* On which *Alanſon* returned Home much diſcontented, and found that in his Abſence freſh ſearch had been made in his Houſe for his Lady, tho' without Succeſs. Then he went to the Biſhop himſelf, and boldly charged him with *Entertaining a wicked Perſon, to the prejudice of his Honour*; telling him who he was, and declared his Crimes, deſiring he might be brought forth, and his Lady ſhould appear. But the Biſhop refuſing this, and telling him, *His Lady was accuſed of Hereſie, and he of Countenancing it*; the *Count* in a Kind of Holy Anger, told him, *That Religion could not be of God, which encouraged Villany, and ſought the Deſtruction of them that were Virtuous.* At this

this the Biſhop ſtormed and told him, *That he ſhould be anſwered in another Nature.* And ſoon after he had ſecret Notice from Court, *That upon a freſh Complaint of the Biſhops, both he and his Lady were proſcrib'd as Hugenots; and that notwithſtanding his Friends Interceſſion, and his own former Merits, his Places were taken away, and his Eſtate ordered to be ſeized as a Terror to others.* *Alanſon* finding himſelf unable to withſtand this Storm, packed up the Richeſt of his Effects, and privately ſent them to his Wife's Father, where ſhe was all this while concealed, and then followed after himſelf. Where having declared the great Injuſtice he had met withal, contrary to all Religion, Honour, Honeſty, and Conſcience. He then told his Relations he was reſolved, by God's Help to embrace that *Religion*, for which he had been a Sufferer before he was a Profeſſor; *For that Religion could not be of God, that did ſo evidently ſet up the Kingdom of the Devil.* At which they all rejoyced, and *Deidamia* more eſpecially; who paſſionately Embracing him, ſaid, *Her Father and Mother were of the ſame Mind with him*; at which *Alanſon* was the more encouraged. But leſt

their

their Adverſaries ſhould come thither to ſearch for them, they withdrew into a ſmall Village and lived obſcurely, while *Montaign* could hear of a convenient Veſſel to tranſport them into a Country where they might enjoy more Liberty.

You have before heard how *Bernard* the Gardener was ſold to a Maſter of a Ship belonging to one of the *French* Plantations in the *Weſt Indies*; before we conclude, we will briefly ſhew how God's Providence watched over him for good alſo In his Voyage at Sea they met with ſo extraordinary a Storm, that all expected preſent Death; but *Bernard* was very Calm, putting up his Fervent Prayer to Almighty God, which was followed by a very great Serenity and Calmneſs. This made the Maſter have a Reſpect for him, and oftentimes diſcourſed with him, his Behaviour being always Sober, and his Diſcourſe Savoury. *The Maſter having made his Voyage, ſold* Bernard *for a Slave, and having ſtaid there about two Months, return'd again to* France, *but the Diſcourſes and Behaviour of* Bernard *had made ſo deep an Impreſſion in his Mind, that he was greatly troubled for having ſold him, inſomuch that he could not Reſt, until he had taken*

taken a Solemn Resolution the next Voyage he made, to bring him back, and accordingly the next Year making another Voyage thither, he made it his Business to enquire after him, and having found him, ask'd if he was willing to have his Liberty, and return to his own Country? Bernard *replied, He never was in Love with Slavery; but was contented under it, whilst God's Providence ordered it so; but if he might have his Liberty, he would choose it rather. Whereupon the Master paid the Ransome, and brought him back to* France; *nor was he a loser by it; for as a Recompense for his Kindness, it pleased God to make* Bernard *an Instrument to open his Eyes, and bring him to the acknowledgment of the Truth.* Bernard *being got again into his own Country, made it is Business to enquire after the Welfare of* Alanson's *Family, and being told of the Sufferings that had lately befallen them, he was extreamly grieved, tho' at the same Time he could not but rejoyce that they suffer'd in so good a Cause. And speaking of them to some of his old Christian Friends; he was told by one of them, that both the* Count *and his* Lady *lived Obscurely and in Disguise, in the Neighbouring Village, and that if he had a Mind to see them, he would give him a Note, to the Gentleman of the House, upon*

which

which he ſhould have Admittance to them; or otherwiſe they would not be ſpoken with by any one. *Bernard* gladly accepted of his Friends Kindneſs; and ſtraight went to the Houſe, and delivered the Gentleman the *Note*, the Purport of which was, *That he had known the Bearer many Years for a Faithful Friend and Brother; and that he had been formerly a Servant of the Count* Alonſon's, *and had a great Deſire to ſee his Lady, which he might ſafely let him do.* Upon reading this *Note*, the Gentleman deſired him to come in, and ſent up one of his Servants to acquaint *Deidamia* there was one below deſired to ſpeak with her; upon which *Bernard* was preſently called up; *Deidamia* was mightily ſurprized to ſee *Bernard*, whom ſhe thought ſhe ſhould never have ſeen more, and very much rejoyced at it; introducing him to her Lord, and afterwards to her Parents, who all made very much of him, and were glad to ſee him. And having communicated the Various Providences of God to one another ſince they had been parted, they all bleſſed the Lord *for his Goodneſs, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men.* And afterward conſulting how to procure a

Veſſel

Veſſel to convey them out of Danger, *Bernard* gave them an Account, that the Maſter of the Veſſel which brought him back to *France*, was alſo converted; and that now his Veſſel lay ready to Sail for *Denmark*; and he was ſure he would be glad to ſerve them. To this they all agreed; and thereupon *Bernard* went immediately to the Maſter of the Ship, who readily conſented to carry them, and ordered their Goods to be brought preſently, and themſelves to come Abroad at Midnight; at which time *Bernard* conducted them to the Ship, and then went Abroad with him in quality of their Servant; and ſoon after, the Wind ſerving, they ſet Sail for *Denmark*; where being arrived, and tarrying a few Days, they hired a *Dutch* Veſſel to carry them to *Rotterdam*, and from thence they went by Boat to *Utrecht*, which being a pleaſant Place, and of a very good Air, they reſolved there to ſettle.

Thus, *Courteous Reader*, thou haſt had a brief, but true Relation of the Mercy and Goodneſs of God to that Noble Family, which is the Subject of this Narrative: And he that Reads it throughout ſeriouſly, will find Cauſe to make the

the ſame Obſervation that *David* did of Old, *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the End of that Man is Peace.* Which the Apoſtle St. *James* farther Exemplifies in his Epiſtle, *You have heard of the Patience of* Job, *and have ſeen the End of the Lord, how he is very pitiful and of tender Mercy.* Here you have ſeen the great diſtreſs of *Deidamia*, and here you have ſeen the Goodneſs of God in her Deliverance. Here you have the Count *Alanſon* rifled of all his Eſtate and Profeſſion; and here you have ſeen how God has Graciouſly made it up, in giving him that Faith which is far more precious than the Gold which periſheth.

But I cannot conclude without giving you an Account of the Judgment of God upon Fronovius *and* Antonio, *that others may Fear and give Glory to God.*

Fronovius after the Seiſure of *Alanſon*'s Eſtate, and his Departure into *Holland*, returned into thoſe Parts, but finding himſelf hated by all Men for his Villany, he retired into *Normandy*, where Soliciting his Landlord's Daughter to yield to his Luſt, and ſhe refuſing it, he took an Opportunity to Raviſh her, for which he was hang'd without the Gates of *Roan.*

And

And as for *Antonio*, tho' he escaped the Justice of Man, he could not escape the Judgment of God, for falling distracted a little Time after, he confessed it was God's Judgment upon him for the Mischief he had wrought against his Lord *Alanson*, and his Virtuous Lady; saying, *They had taken a way to be saved, but he was sure to be damned*; and so Dashing out his own Brains against a Wall, he died miserably. Both of them Verifying the Words of the inspired Pen-Man, *Is not Destruction to the Wicked, and a strange Punishment to the Workers of Iniquity?*

A Brief Account of the Preſent Peſecutions of the French Proteſtants.

THE reſtleſs Malice of the great Enemy of Mankind againſt the Church of God, has been ſufficiently manifeſted in all Ages of the World; and began to exert it ſelf firſt of all in *Cain*, who killed his Brother *Abel*, becauſe his own Deeds were Wicked, and his Brother's Righteous, as the Holy Scriptures inform us: And it has been his frequent Practice, when he could not withdraw the People of God from the Profeſſion of the Truth by the Bait of Worldly Advantage, to raiſe a Flood of Perſecution againſt them, by that Means to extirpate them, if it were poſſible, out of the Earth. Of which no People in *Europe* has in this Age had more Fatal Experience than the Poor Proteſtants in *France*, who have been ſo barbarouſly uſed by the Blood-thirſty Papiſts there, that a True Account of their Sufferings will appear to the next Age rather like Romantick Fictions, than (as indeed they are) Realities. And there are two Things

in

in it that appear alike Admirable; and that is, the barbarous Rage and Cruelty of the Perſecutors, and the invincible Courage and Conſtancy of the Poor Suffers, who are ſo mightily ſupported by the Divine Grace, that they not only Triumph over all their Tortures, but ſuffer joyfully the Loſs of all, as knowing that they have in Heaven a better and a more induring Subſtance. —— But I will recite briefly ſome Inſtances of their Sufferings.

Some they Condemn to the Gallies, where they are coupled commonly with the Vileſt Miſcreants, Condemned thither for the moſt flagitious Crimes, whoſe fearful Oaths and Execrations are continually wounding of their Pious Ears: There is generally five of them placed upon every Form, fettered with a heavy Chain of about ten or twelve foot long: They Shave their Heads, from time to time, to ſhew they are Slaves, and are not allowed to wear their Hats or Perriwigs: They have only Beans, and nothing elſe for their Food, with about fourteen Ounces of Courſe Bread a Day, and no Wine at all. They are devoured in Winter by Lice, and in the Summer by Bugs and Fleas, and

forced

forced to lie upon one another, as Hogs in a Sty: And every Day threatned and tormented by Friars and Prieſts, who not being able to convince them by Reaſon, think to do it by Severity.

Some they put in Priſon, and keep them in Naſty Dungeons and Holes, full of Mire and Dirt, without any Bed, or ſo much as Straw to lie upon, and not ſuffered to have the leaſt glimmering of the Sun, or the Sight of a Candle. And allowed ſo ſmall a Quantity of Victuals, as is hardly ſufficient to keep them alive. In this miſerable Caſe, without any pity to 'em, ſome have been kept above a Year together. One of them being viſited after Twelve-Months Impriſonment in this Manner, by one called a Director of Conſcience, juſt as they were going to bring him his ſmall Allowance, he could not forbear crying out, as ſoon as he ſaw him, *Lord in what a Condition are you, Sir!* To which the poor Sufferer reply'd with a Chriſtian Fortitude, worthy of the Cauſe he ſuffered for, *Cou'd you but ſee the ſecret Pleaſure my Heart Experiences, you would think me too happy.* The Prieſt told him, *The greateſt Sufferings did not intitle to the Glory of Martyrdom, unleſs he ſuffer'd for Truth and Juſtice.* To this the poor Priſoner

in it that appear alike Admirable; and that is, the barbarous Rage and Cruelty of the Perſecutors, and the invincible Courage and Conſtancy of the Poor Suffers, who are ſo mightily ſupported by the Divine Grace, that they not only Triumph over all their Tortures, but ſuffer joyfully the Loſs of all, as knowing that they have in Heaven a better and a more induring Subſtance. —— But I will recite briefly ſome Inſtances of their Sufferings.

Some they Condemn to the Gallies, where they are coupled commonly with the Vileſt Miſcreants, Condemned thither for the moſt flagitious Crimes, whoſe fearful Oaths and Execrations are continually wounding of their Pious Ears: There is generally five of them placed upon every Form, fettered with a heavy Chain of about ten or twelve foot long: They Shave their Heads, from time to time, to ſhew they are Slaves, and are not allowed to wear their Hats or Perriwigs: They have only Beans, and nothing elſe for their Food, with about fourteen Ounces of Courſe Bread a Day, and no Wine at all. They are devoured in Winter by Lice, and in the Summer by Bugs and Fleas, and

forced

forced to lie upon one another, as Hogs in a Sty: And every Day threatned and tormented by Friars and Prieſts, who not being able to convince them by Reaſon, think to do it by Severity.

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ſoner reply'd, *He granted it*; *but that was his Caſe, the Holy Ghoſt ſo ſealed it to his Heart, that the very Thoughts thereof ſupported him in the Midſt of all his Afflictions:* This Perſon has through God's Providence been ſince deliver'd; and has declar'd, that the Conſolations that God out of his infinite Love afforded to him, were ſo great, that he little regarded the Miſeries he was reduc'd to, tho' he continued in that lamentable Condition about two and twenty Months, without changing his Cloths, till his Beard was grown as long as the Hair of his Head, and his Face as pale as a Plaiſter'd Wall; who declared alſo, that when he was deliver'd, the Number of thoſe chained to the Gallies for the ſake of Religion, was about Three Hundred and Seventy, who glorify'd God in their Sufferings, with an unparallel'd Courage and Conſtancy.

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